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Through the Kalahari Desert

William Hunt, G. Antonio Farini

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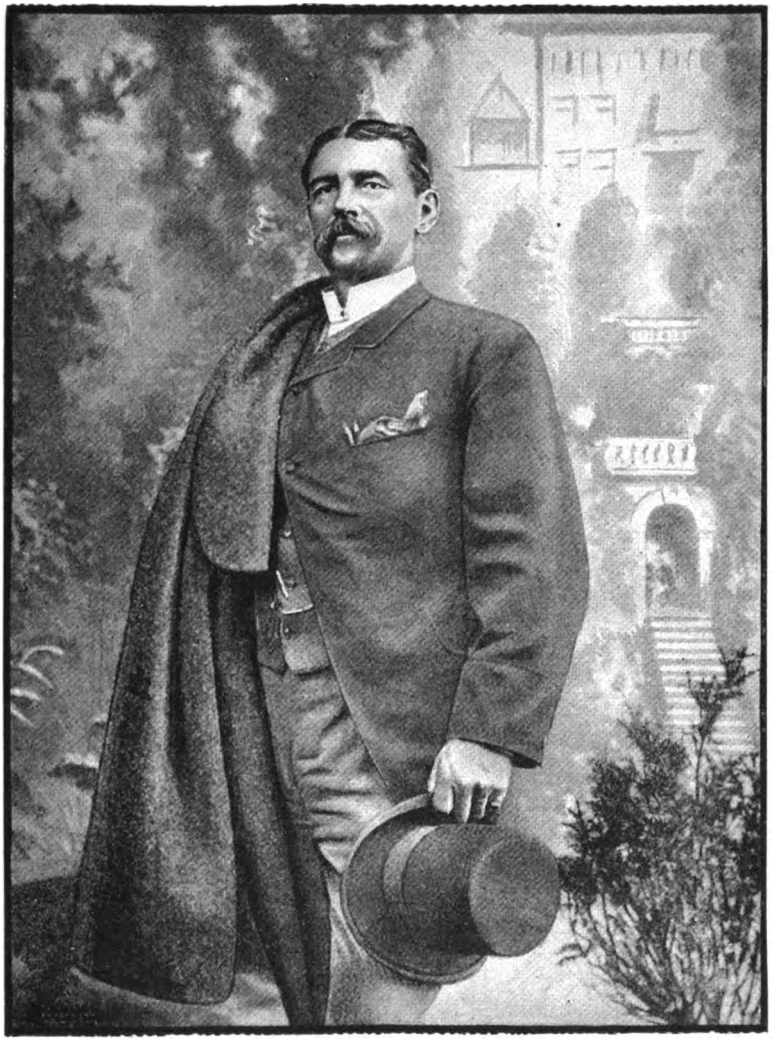

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THROUGH THE KALAHARI DESERT

A NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY WITH GUN CAMERA, AND NOTE-BOOK TO LAKE N'GAMI AND BACK

BY

G. A. FARINI

FORTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS (MOSTLY FROM PHOTOGRAPHS), DIAGRAM, AND MAP

New York
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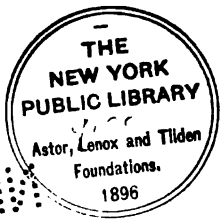

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INTRODUCTION.

Most authors, either in preface or introduction, apologize for what is to follow; and no doubt, where they have had to make many calls upon the indulgence of the public, something of this sort is necessary. But, as this is my first infliction of the kind, I hardly think an apology is required. In fact, were I put to it, I doubt if I could discover any adequate excuse for my presumption. So I shall leave the reader to find all the fault, instead of doing it for him, under the guise of an *apologia*.

A statement, however, of the reasons which prompted me to undertake the journey of which this book is a record, and an introduction to my travelling companions, are the reader's due; so I shall now proceed to accomplish that task.

A year or so ago I brought under the notice of the public a party of Earthmen from the Kalahari. These people were accompanied by an old half-breed hunter, Kert by name, who, having acquired a smattering of their language, which bears a strong resemblance to that of the Bushmen, acted as interpreter.

Kert's account of the grass-covered plains and

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fertile savannas and forests, teeming with game of all sorts, gave the Kalahari the character of a hunter's paradise, instead of the barren desert which it has always been represented to be. Furthermore, he assured me that he knew a certain place where he had found diamonds—one weighing 188 carats. At first I did not quite credit this statement, but later on going through some of the Earthmen's things, looking for poison, I found several diamonds, a fact which, to a certain extent, corroborated old Kert's tale. A change of climate being necessary to recoup my health, I decided to go to Africa and take old Kert with me, and test his story.

But such an expedition could not well be undertaken without the aid of a trustworthy companion, and I knew of but one upon whom I could rely with implicit confidence. This was the person who figures in the following pages under the name of "Lulu."

The public requires no introduction to "Lulu," who some years ago startled them with several novel feats of skill and daring; and who is now following his profession of portrait painter and photographer in Bridgeport, America.

At the time when I determined on my trip, Lulu was with me in America; and it was with much difficulty that I persuaded him to agree to accompany me. When, however, I represented to him what splendid opportunities he would have of obtaining new photographic views and effects, he entered heartily into the idea, and secured all the latest improvements in portable photographic appliances, sketch-books, &c.;

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and we sailed without delay for England, and thence for Cape Town.

Before leaving America I visited my cattle-ranche, when one of my partners hearing me repeat Kert's glowing description of the Desert, suggested that I might do worse than secure a large tract of land there for cattle-ranching purposes. Here, then, was a fresh inducement to visit the country; and diamonds and cattle-ranches thus became the motive of my journey and the basis of this book.

We obtained letters of introduction to all the leading men of the colony, including Sir Hercules Robinson, K.C.M.G., Sir Charles Warren, G.C.M.G., Colonel Schermbrücker, and others; but, finding that somehow or other Kert's story about the diamonds had leaked out, we took our passage under assumed names.

This expedition afforded us the further advantage that it gave us an opportunity of hearing very frank expressions of opinion about ourselves from different passengers on board the *Roslin Castle*. One gentleman in particular told me a story of how he had made "that stingy fellow, Farini, stand drinks; a thing he had never been known to do before"—a story which naturally gave me a much worse opinion of Farini than I had previously entertained.

On the way out, we made the acquaintance of the charming Misses Sauer, and their married sister, the accomplished Mrs. Caldecott; and on our arrival at Cape Town were introduced to Dr. Sauer and Mr. Caldecott, and to Colonel Schermbrücker, the Minister for Public Works, to whom I had a letter of recom-

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mendation from Sir Charles Mills, K.C.M.G., the Agent-General for Cape Colony in London, and who gave us an open letter of introduction to all the Commissioners and Magistrates of the districts we might pass through, requesting them to afford us all the assistance in their power.

Our few days' stay in Cape Town was spent most pleasantly. Dinners were eaten and visits were paid everywhere. The drives were very enjoyable when the "south-easter" did not blow. One of the most pleasant was over the ironstone road to Constantia, to pay a visit to Mr. Cloete, the celebrated wine-grower—one of the old-style Dutch, and a most charming host,—who has the best kept and cleanest place I saw in all Africa. Another delightful drive was along the foot of the Lion's Back Mountain to the residence of Captain Morrison, the jolliest Scotchman I ever met, and one of the institutions of "Malayville," Cape Town.

Meantime Lulu spent many days on Table Mountain, and obtained some very beautiful views, which, along with many others taken during the trip, were exhibited at the recent Photographic Exhibition in London, and afterwards at the meeting of the Berlin Geographical Society, on November 7th, 1885, when I read a paper, in German, on my journey through the Kalahari, as well as before the Royal Geographical Society of England, on March 8th, 1886, when my paper was read, with the Marquis of Lorne in the chair.

The whole of the illustrations in this book are from photographs taken by Lulu, with the single exception of that showing the great "Hercules" Fall, on the

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Orange River, at high water, which, as explained in the proper place, is from a drawing made by him under the most extraordinary circumstances.

I may, perhaps, be permitted to add that, besides resulting in the performance of the great gymnastic and photographic feat of taking views of the largest and most inaccessible Falls in the world—the Hundred Falls on the Orange River—my expedition has completely disproved the long-prevailing notion that the Kalahari is a barren wilderness.

The satisfaction with which I am enabled to record these two principal results of my journey more than repay all the risk and trouble with which it was accompanied.

In conclusion, in order not to make the book too dry for the general reader, I have put into an appendix description of the fauna and flora of the Kalahari, together with a key to the accompanying map.

G. A. Farini.

March, 1886.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION v

CHAPTER I.

By rail from Cape Town—Over the hills—Drought in the Great Karroo—No rain for three years—An ostrich farm—A well-built railway—The Orange River terminus—Close packing—Crossing the Orange River—Team-driving in South Africa—"*Det es nie hotel nie*"—Froude's "Honest Boer"—An oasis—Disappointing "mine host"—Fording the Mud River—Tin-can houses—"Tin Town," *alias* Kimberley 1

CHAPTER II.

Laying in stock—The story of the first diamond—How the mine was discovered—Shady customers—Cheating the revenue—"Diamond cut diamond"—Welcoming the ladies—The "I.D.B."—Bubble companies—Evils of the detective system—Martyrs to civilization 17

CHAPTER III.

The blasting of the blue—Down the crater—Searching the blacks—The washing-grounds—How the diamonds are unearthed—The sorting-tables—Judging the weight of a stone—Who are the diamond thieves?—Life in Kimberley—Its climate and its moral atmosphere—The mining pioneer 30

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CHAPTER IV.

PAGE

A dangerous experiment—A mimic volcano in eruption—Packing up—Starting for the Kalahari—A Bastard encampment—A big bag of partridges—Making friends with the Boers—A good investment—A South African Crusoe—"Lots of trees"—A massacre of the innocents . . . 42

CHAPTER V.

Something like a hot day—How it rains in South Africa—Our first antelope—At Campbell—An aged Griqua chieftainess—Mr. Bartlett's garden—"Born Tired"—A talk with Mr. Virtue—Farmers' troubles in South Africa—Shooting a koran—After the spring-bok—Sunday morning at Griqua Town—A Boer's homestead—Interviewing the Commissioner—The ex-Chief of the Griquas—We visit the "oldest inhabitant"—The country drying up 55

CHAPTER VI.

Killing two stein-bok at one shot—The "Honest Boer" again—Reinforcements—Dining *à la* Bastard—Watering at Abram's Dam—Jan is lost—Stuck fast in the sand—A terrible road—Water at last—A "creamery" at Kheis—How to harness an ox-team—Police duty in Korannaland On the verge of the Kalahari—Oxen *v.* mules—An ungrateful mule—Kert among his relations 79

CHAPTER VII.

A Bastard's family—A Bushman's tent—Jan returns half dead—The story of his adventure—Botanizing in the desert—The sama, or wild water-melon—Bushman's rice—A *bonne-bouche*—Collecting insects—Stuck in a sandhill—A dream of Golconda—Searching for diamonds—Shooting pheasants and wild geese—Latest Paris fashions—Nature's dress-improver—A Mantalini of the desert—A primitive pumping-engine—A parti-coloured family 99

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

PAGE

Jan gets into trouble—My best horse is drowned—Hurrah for life on the desert!—Stuck again!—Swapping mules for oxen—News from Khartoum—A "clever" trader—Riding on Ox-back—A visit from the Hill Bushmen—A sculptured cave—A native dance and concert—Hunting and eating the hyena—A day among the wild fowl—A floral "desert"—Digging for water—We organize a big hunt—Chasing an ostrich I lose my way—A supper of ostrich-meat—A night in the desert with Death for a bed-fellow . . 117

CHAPTER IX.

Lost on the desert—Death from starvation and fatigue—Eating a poisonous root—The agonies of death—A prey to wild beasts—I am given up for dead—A funeral procession—A runaway knock at death's door—Milk-and-water—*Café à la* Kalahari—Delicious water—Grass and sama in plenty—Kuis—The chief "Make Haste"—An extortionate chief—Adventures of a desert trader—I enter into partnership with two Bastard hunters—How to cook sama . . . 137

CHAPTER X.

Lion's spoor—Kert astonishes the natives—Making a night kraal—A novel manger—A grass-covered "desert"—Collecting grass-seeds—A herd of gems-bok attacked by lions—Dirk and Klas run away—In pursuit of Leo—A narrow escape—We find the lion impaled on the gems-bok's horns—Skinning our booty—A lonely night-watch—A strange intruder—I am called on a mysterious errand . . . 153

CHAPTER XI.

Rescuing a dying man—The sick German tells his story—Treacherous Hottentots—Left to die on the desert—The everlasting sama—A wilderness of beautiful flowers—Spring-

Digitized by Google

PAGE

bok bewitched—Taking stock—A sea of grass—A night alarm—A visit from a party of Bechuana traders—A fantastical witch-doctor 170

CHAPTER XII.

The witch-doctor's *séance*—The oracle prophesies good luck—Turning the tables on the conjurer—Nonplussing the nigger—On the borders of the K'gung Forest—A remarkable birds'-nest—A terrible disappointment—Making the best of it—Digging for water—A deserted Balala camp—A lion springs into our camp—How the natives make leather—Native water-bearers—At Lihutitung—A present from Mapaar—Our first bath 189

CHAPTER XIII.

An interview with the chief—A royal beggar—Marriage made easy—A visit to Mapaar's garden—Curious beverages—Mapaar enjoys a drink of eau-de-Cologne—House-building spider—Mapaar invites us to a hunt—I offend my Black Beauty—How to make thick milk—Hunting the gems-bok—The disappointed photographer—Distributing the spoil . 207

CHAPTER XIV.

A family misunderstanding—I am put on my defence—Verdict "not guilty"—Out of the frying-pan into the fire—I turn weather-prophet—An awkward dilemma—A bag of teal—"Won, but not wooed"—My prophecy comes too true—Once more I am put on trial—Chopping logic with Mapaar—All's well that ends well—Farewell to Mapaar—In the forest—On the lions' track 225

CHAPTER XV.

Surprising the lion asleep—A lucky shot—A delicious shower-bath—Milking the cows—The cattle drink to bursting

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PAGE

point—Catching a scorpion—A novel cure for scorpion sting—Charged by a rhinoceros—Bombarding the baby—A sweet-smelling bug—The Kaffir water-melon—The haunt of the pigmies—The M'Kabba tribe—Truffles *à la* pigmy—Making poisoned arrows—A visit to their camp—The dwarfs promise to come with us to England . . 239

CHAPTER XVI.

An elephant hunt—A beautiful tree—Some realistic music—In ambush for the elephants—Charged by the pachyderms—A wounded elephant doctoring himself—A convenient ladder—Kert has a narrow escape—We sup off elephant's feet—A happy release—Hunting the buffalo—More frightened than hurt—A grand cattle-grazing country—In luck again!—A herd of zebra—A fortune waiting to be caught—A puzzle for an antiquary—A substitute for potato—Evidence of the gradual elevation of the country—Curious customs of the Damaras 257

CHAPTER XVII.

Through the lion's territory—From Ochimbunde to Kerses—Another way of making thick milk—An Englishman *incog.*—A city of huts—Dirk Verlander the chief of the Bastards—In a quandary—How Verlander became "captain"—Time reckoning and money equivalents among the Bastards—Bastard customs—A cattle ranche—Going to meetin'—Master-beggars—The private secretary—We start on a hunting expedition—A twilight reverie—Trapping a jackal 273

CHAPTER XVIII.

Defying the poison-berries—A ride after a giraffe—A tall beast—Hints on giraffe hunting—Charming away the lions and vultures—A desert delicacy—I spend a night alone in a tree—A descent of vultures in force—A monster vulture—Nocturnal visitors—The "lion's scavenger" *versus* "lion's

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PAGE

provider"—The hyena enters a *caveat*—In dreamland—A curious bird—Three lions appear on the scene—Photographing Leo at home—A foolhardy experiment—Camera *versus* gun—Death of the king 290

CHAPTER XIX.

A lion's leap—*Qui s'excuse s'accuse*—Watching the wildebeeste—After the giraffe—Astonishing the natives—Photographing the dying giraffe—Catching a baby giraffe—Cutting up the booty—Making biltong—Stalking the ostriches—A night of feasting—A two-legged lion—A nocturnal adventure—How the poisoned arrows work 310

CHAPTER XX.

Butterfly-hunting—A chameleon—Mixing the poison-pot—Smearing the arrows—How the arrows are made—"Honey-beer"—How the wild-bees' nests are made—Honey gathering—Chewing the grubs—Making honey-beer—A drunken orgie—A false alarm—A tragic sequel to the feast—Friends not enemies 333

CHAPTER XXI.

The Vaalpens or Kattea tribe—A "Christian" Kaffir—Whitewashing the darkies—A drink of nectar—A Kattea hunt—Running short of provisions—In the slave-market—Upington our pole-star—Bitten by a snake—A new mountain—A wonderful wall—An archæological discovery—Collecting water-insects—A bird's-nesting snake—Our laundry—In straits for want of food and water—A moonlight scene—A fresh team—A lucky find—Death of "Lady Anna"—Bitten by a snake—*Similia similibus curantur* . . 349

CHAPTER XXII.

At Mier again—The private secretary becomes confidential—A war of extermination—Terrible confessions—A trustworthy councillor—A garden at Mier—A fertile soil—The "born-

Digitized by Google

PAGE

tired" disease—An antidote to snake poison—An enterprising Boer—A Bastard family—Making the calves useful—Exchange and barter—A raid on the water-fowl—K'Abiam Pool 368

CHAPTER XXIII.

Down the banks of the Orange River—A settler from Canada—The waggon overturned—Surgery under difficulties—Engineering the road—Exploring the river-banks—Crossing the rapids—First glimpse of the Falls—A waterfall out of the solid rock—A whirlpool—A beautiful scene—A flowery bower—Pride has a fall—Photographing the rapids—Freaks of nature—Reconnoitring the Hercules Falls . 383

CHAPTER XXIV.

An acrobatic enterprise—Photographing the Hercules Falls—A sudden rise in the river—We make a raft—Pheasants, guinea-fowls, and rock-pigeons—Discretion the better part of valour—Descending the precipice—Farini Towers and Falls—A magnificent sight—A narrow escape—Mudlarks—A well-earned supper—An underground stream—The Diamond Falls—Surprised by the flood—"The Hundred Falls" 399

CHAPTER XXV.

Imprisoned by the flood—A night in mid-stream—A baboon for breakfast—Escaping from prison—We are welcomed with smiles—A visit from a poetical Bastard—Bushman Precipice—Hippopotamus-shooting extraordinary—A civilized dinner—An enterprising settler—A tobacco factory—An island estate—Hottentot doctors 419

CHAPTER XXVI.

At Upington—The pleasures of civilization—A fair gardener and a garden fair—A notable irrigation work—A Bushman's

Digitized by Google

PAGE

bonne-bouche—A happy family—A dangerous ford—Patience and perseverance—A sharp trader—A grand tea-party—A Boer wedding party—Catechized about the Queen—Prieska—Hard lines for the Bushmen—Froude's "honest Boer" at last!—Hope Town again—A sale by auction—Honest Boers—"Interviewed"—General conclusions . 434

APPENDIX.

Flora of the Kalahari 447
Reptiles of the Kalahari 450
Insects of the Kalahari 453
Birds of the Kalahari 456
Mammalia of the Kalahari 461
Geology of the Kalahari 467
Table of Distances 468

INDEX 471

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

		PAGE
The Author Lulu, the Artist	*Frontispiece*	
View of Kimberley	*to face*	18
The Diamond mine	„	44
House where Livingstone first saw Mary Moffat		58
Mr. Bartlett's house at Campbell		59
A Boer's homestead		69
Old Mission House, Griqua Town		77
Old Kert, my guide		97
Crossing the Kalahari		108
Riding on Ox-back		123
Wall drawings in Hill-Bushmen's Cave		124
Some Kalahari wild fowl		129
View of the Desert near Kuis		146
Dirk and Klas	*to face*	150
A group of Kalahari flora		180
Nest of Grosbeak		196
King Mapaar and wife	*to face*	223
Vaalpens	„	237
Camping by the way		241
The M'Kabba dwarfs	*to face*	255
Our laundry on the Desert		270
Dirk Verlander		276
Death of the Giraffe		293

Digitized by Google

		PAGE
Lions eating the Giraffe	*to face*	307
Shooting a Giraffe		321
Drying meat		325
Stalkingthe Ostrich		330
Kattea tribe		350
Ruins on the Kalahari Desert		358
The first bath for many months		361
Dirk Verlander and his "groot-men"	*to face*	369
Watering the cattle by moonlight	„	377
A Bastard family		378
K'Abiam pool		381
Rock Drift		391
Gorilla Rock	*to face*	397
Lulu Falls and Chasm		397
Book Rock and Falls	*to face*	398
Farini Falls and Towers	„	405
The Anna Falls		409
The Scott Gorge and Falls	*to face*	413
The Diamond Falls	„	414
The Schermbrücker Falls	„	415
The Hundred Falls		416
The Hercules Falls at half flood		425
PLAN of The Hundred Falls of the Orange River	*to face*	428
MAP of the Author's route	*at end*	

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THROUGH THE KALAHARI DESERT.

CHAPTER I.

By rail from Cape Town—Over the hills—Drought in the Great Karroo—No rain for three years—An ostrich farm—A well-built railway—The Orange River terminus—Close packing—Crossing the Orange River—Team-driving in South Africa—"*Det es nie hotel nie*"—Froude's "Honest Boer"—An oasis—Disappointing "mine host"—Fording the Mud River—Tin-can houses—"Tin Town," *alias* Kimberley.

THE evening of Friday the 2nd June, 1885, found a crowd of people, travellers with heaps of friends to see them off, and the usual proportion of idlers flattering themselves that they were making good use of their time doing nothing, and of curious onlookers interested in everybody else's business because they had none of their own to attend to, on the platform of the Cape Town Railway Station. The "mail express," destined to carry inland the letters from home that had arrived on the previous evening, was about to start, and there was the inevitable excitement which the departure of a favourite train always creates. Among the passengers were Dr. Sauer, Mr. Caldecott, Lulu, and myself, bound for Hope Town, then the nearest station to Kimberley, but now united by rail with that city of diamonds. When I heard that there was a Pullman

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sleeping-car attached to the train, I felt myself at home again, and tried to imagine that the crowd of Malays were only negroes, and to ignore the Semitic features of the majority of the loafers on the platform. But on closer acquaintance the "Pullman" bore quite as distant a resemblance to the sleeping-car of the American railroads as the yellow skins of the Malay boys did to the ebony face of Sambo. On one side of the gangway was a row of seats for one person, and on the other side a row of wider seats to hold two. Over each of these latter the attendant—or "steward" as he is called—suspended from the roof of the car a piece of canvas, on which he placed a thin, dirty mattress; and this constituted the "bed." There was no covering whatever; and as I had stowed all my rugs away in the luggage-van, there was no alternative but to "turn in all standing;" for by this time the train was some miles out of Cape Town. However, I managed to sleep pretty soundly in my novel hammock till the train slackened speed as it approached the summit of the Hexe Mountains, near the Hexe River. Having heard much of the beauty of the scenery hereabouts, I "turned out" to look at it, but was disappointed to see nothing but a series of rugged mountain spurs. Although it was bright moonlight, no details were visible. By this time, at such a height above the sea-level, it was getting very cold, and the rugs would have been welcome; but when the day dawned we were well down on the other side of the mountains, and rapidly advancing into the Great Karroo, and then we began to feel what it is like when the sun tries to make up for lost time. The heat was intense; the eye became tired of the perpetual trem-

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bling appearance which every object assumed in the parched air; and it seemed impossible to keep cool even when standing on the platform at the end of the cars in the rush of air caused by the motion of the train. Not a cloud in the sky: the very atmosphere was parched and kiln-dried, causing a peculiar mirage which made distant hills look near, and magnified them to twice their size; and yet so intensely clear was the atmosphere that the smallest object stood out in sharply-defined detail. Hotter and still hotter it became as the sun rose higher: and beneath such a brazen sky as this the people had existed for the last two years! Not a drop of rain for four and twenty months! As far as the eye could reach nothing but a weary expanse of parched-up clay, the monotony broken only by a few stunted, leafless bushes, and by a succession of stony, flat-topped hills (or *koppjes*) from fifty to one hundred feet high.

Such was the Karroo, when I saw it first, after a two years' drought: the most terrible, arid, parched-up, kiln-dried, scorched, baked, burnt, and God-forsaken district the sun ever streamed down upon: not even excepting the Sahara; for there there is nothing but sand, no object to serve as a foil to the solitude; while here the sense of desolation is intensified by seeing here and there a farmer's hut. What! farmers in this country? Yes, three years ago these huts, miles apart as they are, and standing out in gaunt desolation, were surrounded by numberless flocks and herds; their inmates, now beggars, were then owners of ten or twenty thousand sheep apiece. And still they look forward to the advent, too long deferred, of the refreshing rains, which in a few days—hours almost—will transform this

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desert into a smiling expanse of rich pasture-land. I cannot, of course, decline to believe what I am told on the best possible authority; but it seems incredible that the Great Karroo can ever be other than it is now —an apparently hopeless desert. Not a blade of grass, not a leaf, visible; not even the beasts of the desert, the klip-bok (rock buck), or stein-bok (stone buck), which make their homes among the flat-topped koppjes, are to be seen: the only living creatures are here and there huge heavy-winged *aasvogels*, or vultures, making riot among the carcases of the horses and oxen that fairly strew the tracks used by the transport-drivers.

Now and then the railway crosses a deep ravine or a wide gorge, which, in the rainy season, would be filled with water. Splendid rivers, many of them, but now as innocent of water as of whisky.

Suddenly the train stopped close to a broad channel, which once was known as the Gamka River, but the bed of which is now heated rock. The station-master said one of the wells had run dry, and the other showed signs of giving out, while the water in the large dam would not last more than a fortnight longer. A glass of water at the refreshment-rooms cost 3*d*. It was hardly surprising therefore that a "drink" of spirits should cost 1*s*., and a bottle of beer 3*s*. 6*d*. The proprietor of the restaurant, a fat brown Boer, said all his sheep were dead, and he had not a cow or an ox left: yet he still hoped for better times, and he was a fair specimen of the general run of the inhabitants. Sometimes a Boer farmer[1] would come to

[1] The word Boer really means "farmer," but has come to be regarded as synonymous with an Africander, i.e. a person of Dutch descent born in Africa.

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the station, with an anxious, wistful look on his face, which seemed to say he wished he could go away with us and leave his "farm" to itself; but in answer to questions there was always the same forlorn hope that the rain would fall some day; the same assurance that when it did fall it would bring better times. It is a common opinion that the colony will never do much good as long as the Boer element predominates; but I could not help thinking that if it were not for them the Karroo, at any rate in its present state, would be uninhabited, for no Englishman could live on hope, while his hands were idle at his side. He would at least attempt to store up, against a dry day, some of the superfluous moisture of the wet seasons.

As a sort of set-off, I suppose, to this parched-up condition of the Karroo, I was told that in Calvinia and Fraserburg there had been no rain for three years.

"Oh, that is nothing," interposed a well-informed man who knew South Africa. "Up in Namaqualand no rain has been known to fall for twelve years, and the natives are reported to have devoured their children in the madness of thirst and starvation; while in Great Namaqualand there is a district where rain has never fallen."

"Ah! I felt sure, all the time, that Hell could not be a great way off this place," was all the answer I could give; "and as for those who are obliged to spend their lives here, they need have no fear of a future punishment."

Leaving Beaufort West, we got among the mountains again, and left the Karroo behind us; the first evidence of that fact being seen in the occasional occurrence of a giant cactus, still green, in spite of old Sol's rays,

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and in the increased height of the bushes which grew here and there. Shortly after passing Victoria West, a station some distance from the town of that name, we came to an ostrich-farm, situated on a small plateau. In front of the house was a small garden, in which grew a few stunted castor-bean plants, irrigated by water from the tank which fed the railway engine. I counted about thirty black male ostriches and as many grey-coloured females, some of which had six or eight chicks beside them. The whole paddock was surrounded by a low fence of wire and brushwood, not more than two feet high, but high enough to enclose these "stupid" birds, which do not seem to have enough sense to attempt—or, from the breeder's point of view, are so sensible as not to attempt—to lift their long legs over this mimic hedge and be off.

These ostriches were the only living creatures, save the vultures, we had seen in a journey of 400 miles. This little irrigation tank was the only attempt to store surplus water in the same distance, and that, apparently, was due more to the necessities of the railway than to the enterprise of the ostrich-farmer. Indeed, the only good thing I saw on the whole journey to Hope Town—600 miles—was the railway. Well built and ballasted, and kept in thoroughly good order, it "rode" easily, and admitted of a good rate of speed being kept up. The whole distance was traversed in thirty-two hours, including stoppages—not at all a bad pace, considering the gradients in many cases were as much as one in forty.

About 10 p.m. we arrived at a station called De Aar, the junction with the Port Elizabeth line. Here we had to change, and bundling our things out on the

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platform in the dark, had an hour to wait for the train from Middleburg to convey us to the north.

Travelling all night, we arrived at Hope Town—or rather the "Orange River Terminus," about nine miles from the river and the same from Hope Town—at 4 a.m., and here we had to exchange the railway for the coach to Kimberley, a distance of seventy miles. The mail-cart was sent off without delay, passengers having their choice of two regular coaches, one "run" by the mail contractors, Messrs. Gibson, and the other by the old South African pioneer, Mr. De Witt. The ordinary fare for the distance is 2*l.* 10*s.* for each passenger, and 4*d.* per lb. for all baggage over 25 lbs.

Mr. Caldecott had his own trap waiting for him, and was off next. The two coaches were soon filled to overflowing, so some of us went shares in hiring a special mule-waggon, which Mr. De Witt offered to "conduct" himself. There was just room for eight of us, and we were congratulating ourselves on getting a conveyance "made to order," when two ladies begged to be allowed to join. Of course we could not refuse, and had all got nicely packed together when a young lady—Miss Pullinger, the daughter of the principal owner of the Dutoitspan Diamond Mine, and her little sister and brother—came up in great haste, having received an urgent telegram to go to Kimberley at once. There was no other conveyance; would we make room just for three little ones? Mr. De Witt made no objection on behalf of the mules, so we made none on behalf of ourselves; and with a little judicious squeezing we packed ourselves in somehow.

The banks of the river are so steep that great care has to be exercised in driving down; if anything goes

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wrong with the break, there is nothing to prevent you going straight into the water. So on reaching the edge we dismounted, while the coach was driven down to the *pont* (*Anglice*, ferry, or floating bridge)—a flat-bottomed scow, attached by a pulley-block to a wire stretched tightly across the river. When we were "all aboard," the bow of the scow was turned a little up-stream, and the force of the current took us across to the opposite shore—or rather to the edge of a sandbank about fifty feet wide, over which the male passengers were carried on the shoulders of a stalwart Zulu, while the ladies had the privilege of resuming their seats in the coach.

After the succession of waterless river-beds, the sight of the noble Orange River was quite a treat. The stream was only half-full, but the wide shelving banks of deep white sand, through which the mules laboriously dragged the coach, showed what a grand volume of water must roll down during the rainy season.

Slaking our thirst with ginger-beer—bought in a little shanty of corrugated iron, the inside temperature of which was that of an oven just ready for the bread to be put in—we resumed our seats on the coach, and the "slasher" began his work. It takes two coachmen to drive a team in South Africa, one man holding the reins, and another using the whip—a stout cane with a hide lash, some six yards or more in length, more like a clumsy fishing-rod-and-line than a whip. Out of the whole team only the leaders and wheelers are under the direct control of the driver, the reins being merely passed through a loop in the harness of the intervening pairs; but the driver's efforts are quite

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surpassed by those of the slasher, who, taking his weapon of torture in both hands, rends the air with his shouts and with the swishes and cracks and snaps of his whip.

After some hours of this ear-splitting performance we outspanned opposite a Boer's house—a structure of sun-dried mud-bricks, somewhat similar to the houses I had seen in Mexico, where they are called *adobes*. It was a relief to be able to get down and stretch one's legs, after being packed thirteen—not counting the drivers—in a waggon constructed for eight. On attempting to alight I found my legs so inextricably mixed up with Miss Pullinger's that I hardly knew whether to jump down on hers or on my own; but everybody took the squeezing in good part, Miss Pullinger especially exciting our admiration by the plucky manner in which she bore the discomfort, holding, as she did, her two little charges on her lap all the time, but never complaining, and declining every offer of relief with a pleasant smile. It seemed a shame that such a treasure should have her lot cast in this country, instead of enjoying the comforts of England.

Knocking at the door, through which we could see the family at dinner, with a minister occupying the seat of honour, and finding the table was well filled, I asked in my bad Dutch if we could have dinner.

"Nein," replied the farmer; "det es nie hotel nie."

But I was particularly hungry, so I walked in and shook hands all round, which I was told was the proper thing to do, and called the old Boer and his wife "uncle" and "aunt," and the younger ones "nephews" and "nieces." Then spying a pail of milk with a dipper in it I took a long drink, and asked,

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"How much?" One of the girls answered, "Sixpence." So I called the others in, and the pail was soon empty; and then, shaking hands and laying our sixpences on the table, we filed out and took our departure. I don't think the old Boer quite liked it, because we were "English;" but, if we were glad to get his milk, he was glad enough to receive our coins. And he was not particular about the manner in which these latter got into his possession; for, unless I do the worthy man great injustice, he was the richer by a good many more sixpences than we had bargained for, for we had not gone more than half a mile on our journey when Miss Pullinger discovered that her purse was gone. She was certain she had it when she paid her sixpence, and she must have dropped it at the house. So we all voted that De Witt should walk back after it, which he at once agreed to do. But his mid-day march through the burning sand—with the thermometer at 140°—was in vain. The purse was nowhere to be found, and the unanimous verdict was that Froude's "honest Boer" had annexed it.

About 1 p.m. we arrived at Thomas's Farm, where we found dinner awaiting us, the coach ahead of us having happily given warning of our approach. The farm was quite an oasis in the desert. A large dam, fed by a spring, was used to irrigate a garden of about a quarter of an acre, the outer boundary of which was a thicket of fig-trees laden with fruit, with an inner fence of grape-vines from which hung luscious bunches. There were, besides, peach-trees, the fruit of which was however insipid, a plentiful stock of well-flavoured melons, and various vegetables, specimens of which graced our dinner-table.

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What astonished me more than anything else was the fact that the goats and cattle drinking at the dam were actually fat; not like the transparent, kiln-dried, living skeletons that had appeared here and there like ghosts amid the desolation of the country round about. No grass, no leaves on the stunted bushes, how could they lay up those stores of flesh and fat? Mr. Thomas explained that he had 300 horses, 200 goats, 500 cattle, and 5000 sheep, and that it required all his extensive range of 40,000 acres to keep them in condition during the drought. Even then, although they had water every day by means of his irrigation system, some of them had died; but not many more than he lost every year from "lung-sickness," and the disease known as "stiff-sickness." His water supply was the salvation of his stock.

Leaving this oasis, we were soon passing through the same monotony of a parched-up landscape. At one spot, going down a slight slope, at the foot of which there was probably a little moisture, we saw half a dozen of the graceful and gorgeously plumaged large crested crane; and presently old Kert espied a stein-bok, and got quite excited because his rifle was packed up in the bottom of the waggon, and he could not shoot it.

Our mules were getting tired, and were gradually slackening speed, notwithstanding the blandishments of the whip. But yet, towards evening, we overtook Mr. Caldecott's turn-out and the coaches, both of which had outspanned for a change of "horses." We followed their example; but for the worse: for we had given to us the mules that had been left by the down-waggon, and had already done thirty miles that day. So after an

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hour's jog-trot, we stopped at a little *winkel*, or country shop, where we put up for the night. The accommodation was not of the first class. First of all we had a difficulty with the landlord, who had been overjoyed to find an extra party of fifteen alight at his door, and had prepared supper accordingly, but whose pleasant manner gave way to an outburst of angry expostulations when only Lulu and myself put in an appearance at table. But this did not spoil our appetites, and we did justice to the fare. The spring-bok was especially good. It was the first time I had tasted this, the "venison" of the country, and I came to the conclusion that it was the best meat I had eaten.

Meanwhile, everybody else had seized the opportunity of snatching a few hours' sleep; for we were to start again just before midnight. It still wanted a couple of hours before then, so Lulu and I extemporized a couch out of some sacks of wool that lay in front of the shop, expecting the drivers to call us when they inspanned. But when I next opened my eyes it was daylight. I had been dreaming, and awoke with a start, wondering where on earth I was. A glance around soon reassured me. There, on a sheet (save the mark!) of corrugated iron, lay Miss Pullinger, with her little sister and brother snuggled close to her, fast asleep. Close by, on the ground, were scattered the rest of our party: all but the two remaining ladies who, trying to sleep in their seats in the waggon, had passed a night of alternate nods and starts, and were less refreshed than anybody. I managed to get a cup of coffee for the ladies, and in less than twenty minutes we were once more packed in our sardine-box on wheels, and off on the next stage, to the junction of

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the Modder, or Mud River—a name it well deserved —with another stream whose name I forget, but which did not deserve a name at all, since it contained no water, and even its mud was dry.

Here we had breakfast, consisting of mutton, parched up like the country that grew it, and coffee as muddy as the river. Price, half a crown. To wash the breakfast down, some of us had a bottle of lager beer, for which 3*s.* 6*d.* was charged, and the beer was voted cheaper than the breakfast.

Fording the river was a pretty easy task: the difficulty was not the water, but the stones, for the bed was a jumble of loose rocks, with here and there a pool of mud. Just below the ford is a handsome bridge, in course of construction by the Government; for a bridge is sorely needed when the river is full. At such times as many as 300 teams of oxen—some of them with twenty in each team—may be seen accumulated over the banks of the river, waiting for the water to subside.

Col. Schermbrücker told me that on one occasion he was about to cross the river at this place, with a number of other teams, when the water suddenly came down so heavily that they had to wait for it to subside, and before the flood was over there were about 200 teams collected on both sides. He was about ninetieth in order of crossing, and the rule of "first come first served" is always observed. Hoping to save time, he paid 10*l.* for the right of crossing in place of team No. 10, but the river fell as suddenly as it rose, and by the time his turn came the river was fordable in several places, and No. 90 got across as quickly as he did!

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After leaving the junction, the next sign of life was at the farm called Blisset's, where we saw a Kaffir driving some dozen or two young ostriches, accompanied by their mother.

Here was the first symptom of our approach to Kimberley, in the shape of the wire fencing with which the farm—some 60 square miles—was surrounded. Thick poles of thorn, of every imaginable shape and size, supported an equally varied assortment of horizontal wires, of all thicknesses—some pieces forming a solid rod of three-quarters of an inch in diameter—which had evidently seen service in the diamond-mines.

A few miles farther we outspanned to water the mules at a dam, which, the driver told us was said to bring the proprietor 2000*l.* a year—which I thought was a thousand times more than the whole country was worth.

An hour later we came in sight of a great embankment of green clay, which I took to be part of the works for the construction of the Kimberley railway, perched up so high, probably, to be out of the way of the floods.

"No," the driver explained, "that is the blue earth that has been brought out of the Bultfontein diamond-mines. We are now close to the Du Toit's Pan. Yonder is the reservoir of the Kimberley water-works: the water is brought from the Vaal River, about fifteen miles away."

Getting nearer to Kimberley the roads were strewn with empty tins, of all shapes and sizes: in some places such heaps of them that we could hardly pass. There were millions of these tins, the contents of which

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had at one time formed the sole food of the miners. Here and there, out of the abundance of this waste material, some ingenious individual had utilized some of the larger cans, by spreading them out flat, joining them together, and, with the help of a sheet of corrugated iron, a gunny-bag or two, and a few pieces of hoop-iron, constructed most comical-looking huts, which formed the dwelling-places of the native labourers. After all it was quite appropriate, after applying the contents of the tins internally, to reserve the tins themselves for "outward application."

Through this street of tins we entered "Tin Town," as Kimberley is popularly known, from the array of corrugated galvanized iron shanties which surround the market square. Here we arrived about 3 p.m., and put up at the Transvaal Hotel, where Mr. Constable, the courteous manager, specially informed us that the rooms allotted to us were those which Lady Florence Dixie had occupied. The sitting-rooms were built of mud, facing the street, with separate structures of galvanized iron at the back for bed-rooms, which felt like ovens, compared with which the mud-built apartments were deliciously cool. In this respect old Kert had the advantage of us; for, although it was against the rules for a black man to live anywhere but in the stable, I got leave for him to sleep on the floor of the sitting-room.

A bath, a good dinner, and a comfortable bed were unspeakable luxuries, after the discomfort of the long journey; and needless to say we made the most of each of them. Lulu was in especial need of a "wash and brush up," for finding the interior of the waggon a trifle too crowded, he had performed the latter part

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of the journey on the top among the luggage, and when he came down he was the picture of what Adam must have looked like in one of the earlier stages of his manufacture out of the dust of the earth.

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CHAPTER II.

Laying in stock—The story of the first diamond—How the mine was discovered—Shady customers—Cheating the revenue—"Diamond cut diamond"—Welcoming the ladies—The "I.D.B."—Bubble companies—Evils of the detective system—Martyrs to civilization.

The next day was devoted to making preparations for our journey to the Kalahari. First I arranged to buy Mr. Caldecott's waggon and team of six mules, and advertised for a shooting-horse; and then commenced to lay in a stock of powder and shot, pots and pans, kettles and coffee-pots, blankets and beads, pipes and tobacco, pails and water-barrels; and, most useful of all, water-bags: these last are a Cape institution, consisting simply of a stout linen bag, which is filled with water and hung in the sun to keep cool! The evaporation is so rapid that the contents keep nearly as cold as ice water: just the thing for America!

Everybody had some special recommendation to make of a particular article which was represented to be indispensable, and at first I was glad to profit by the experience of others. But at last Lulu pointed out that the capacity of a waggon was limited.

"Look at this room: it's twice as large as any waggon, and it's just chock full. You surely are not going to cart all Kimberley off to the Kalahari Desert!"

"That's just what I do want to do, Lu; and not only

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so, but I intend then to take Kimberley and the Kalahari per steamer to London. Just you bring your camera out, and 'take the town,' and to-morrow we will go and get a look at the bowels of the earth, and you shall 'take' them too."

I knew Lulu's weakness for photographing anything, from the moon to a monkey, would soon make him forget all his troubles: and half an hour afterwards he had secured several "plates," from one of which the accompanying view of Kimberley is taken.

Next day, Dr. Sauer introduced us to Mr. Steib, the manager of the French Diamond Mining Company, who took us to the mining board, introduced us to the secretary and all the members, and procured for us a pass to go over any part of the mine and take photographs of it.

I should, perhaps, here explain that what is called the "Kimberley Mine" is owned principally by three companies—the Central, the French, and the Standard—which have bought up nearly the whole of the small "claims" into which the mine was divided when the first "rush" of diamond diggers took place thither in 1872.

The story of the first diamond having been picked up by a Boer on the banks of the Orange River, and of its having been a child's plaything for years before its value was recognized, is well known. This led to further search being made, and numbers of stones were picked up in the sand and gravel of the banks and bed of the Orange, and afterwards of the Vaal River, where there are still many diggers working the alluvial deposits. Gradually, however, diamonds were found in dry gravel patches at some distance

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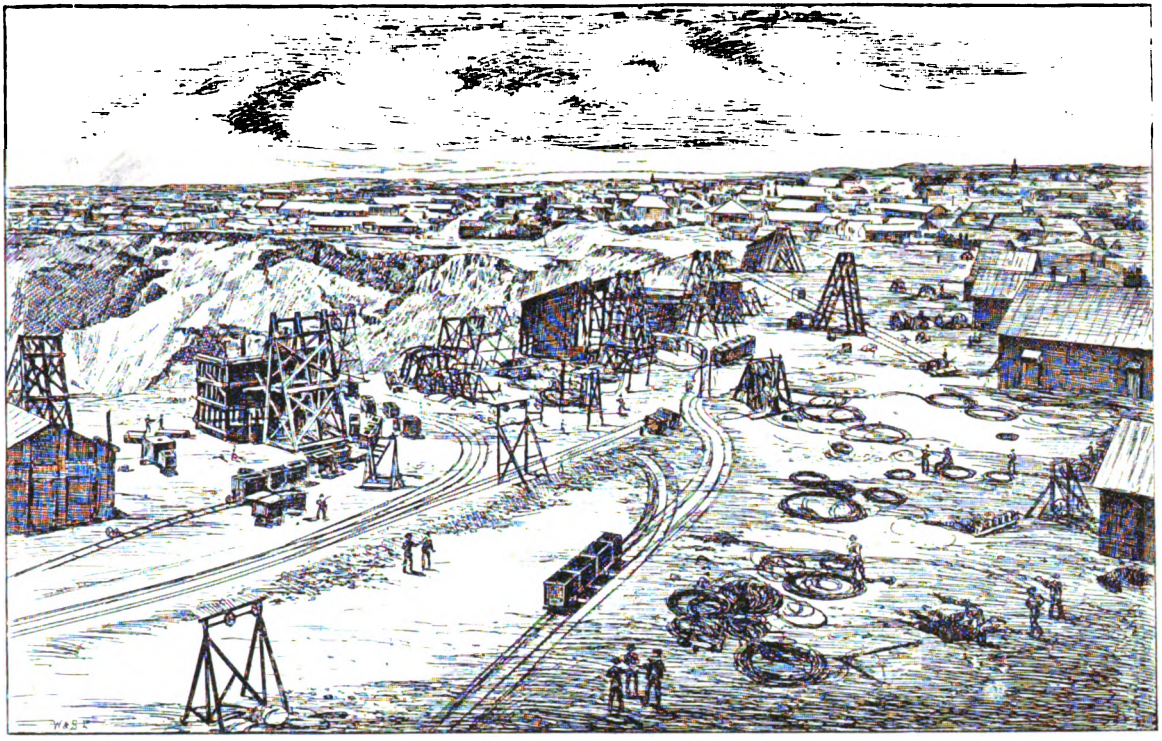

VIEW OF KIMBERLEY.

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS.

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from the river: first at Du Toit's Pan, afterwards at Bultfontein, then at De Beer's Farm, and lastly at a place about a mile distant from De Beer's, called Colesburg Koppje—so named by two young men coming from Colesburg, who first discovered diamonds there.

"Colesburg Koppje" was originally, to outward appearance, a layer of pebbles and sand, among which the gems lay scattered; but all this gravelly deposit has been removed, and a huge crater, 350 feet deep, and oval, or nearly round, has been excavated, whose sloping sides are covered with broken wires and other *débris*.

Colesburg Koppje soon became known as "New Rush," and it was not till 1878 that the more dignified name of Kimberley, was conferred upon the town which had by that time sprung up. "All sorts and conditions of men" in thousands rushed to the place, and began marking out their claims. A space thirty feet square was allowed to each claim, and no individual was permitted to take more than ten claims. This regulation, which the diggers agreed to among themselves, was afterwards ratified by the Government, who sent down officials to keep order, and to collect a duty of 10*s.* per claim per month. It was soon found that many of the areas selected were valueless. As the gravel was dug out the diamondiferous area became narrower and narrower, being confined within easily defined limits by a wall, or reef, of shaly limestone encircling it,[1] which narrows gradually towards the

[1] On the 5th of April, 1884, a great catastrophe occurred, the reef of shale lining the side of the mine slipping in, and covering nearly all the workings and machinery. At about seven o'clock in the morning the reef was seen to start, and in less than five hours most of the workings were smothered. The French and Standard Companies managed to save part of their plant; but the workings were

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bottom, at the rate of about one in five, so that a vertical section of the mine would be something like a V shape.

Suddenly the dry, sandy gravel, in which the diamonds were found, gave way to a stratum of hard blue ground, which the miners thought to be bed rock. Claims were sold for what they would fetch, and abandoned as worthless, and the diamond-fields seemed to have lost their lustre in the eyes of all but those whose gravel workings still held out. Presently, however, some men sinking a well in this blue ground at Bultfontein noticed a diamond tumble out of the bucket, and it soon became evident that the blue flint-like ground contained diamonds in greater abundance than the superincumbent gravel, though, strangely enough, not a stone was found outside the limits of the "reef."

The price of claims rose rapidly; the "knowing ones," who had sold what they thought an exhausted claim for a song, sang small; the lucky ones were jubilant. In less than a year there were 10,000 people crowded together, all anxious to make their fortunes. Owners had to be very careful not to leave possession of their claims, or they would be "jumped" by the

buried, in some cases to a depth of ninety feet, with worthless reef. This has been partly removed by the Standard Company and Messrs. Stuart Brothers, but the French Company have abandoned the attempt to remove the fallen *débris*—which has slipped down twice since on their claims after they had pulled up a million loads of it,—and they are now sinking a deep shaft, distant about 1000 feet, and 1000 feet deep, from which they will drive adits to reach their claims. The Central Company, though it has not abandoned the surface workings, is following this example, and the race between the two companies is being watched with great interest.

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new-comers; and it became necessary to have regular surveys made and official registers of ownership kept, a fee being charged by Government on every transfer as well as on every licence. Quarters, eighths, and sixteenths became as valuable as a whole claim before, and the business of sharebroker and diamond-merchant became more profitable than that of diamond-digging, the number of persons engaged in it being almost as large as that of actual diggers. The "broking" business passed principally into the hands of Jews, who, from the age of fifteen to sixty, mustered in great strength. The knowledge of diamonds on the part of many of the diggers did not extend beyond the fact that they are used to cut glass, and they fell an easy prey to the descendants of Isaac and Moses. Besides this, it was so easy for a hired digger to secrete a stone, and dispose of it surreptitiously, that the owners of claims were fleeced of a large share of their property; but they were powerless to protect themselves, till a law was passed (in 1873) to the effect that no person or firm could, under a penalty of twelve months' imprisonment, buy a diamond without first taking out a trading licence—for which a fee of 10*l.* was charged—and then only from a licensed dealer or broker, or from a registered digger or owner of mining property.

But this law was easily evaded. A trading licence was issued to a "firm" at the same price as to an individual, and a good story is told of an Israelite making a bet of 10*l.* to 1*l.* with a Christian that he could purchase a licence for 1*l.* The bet was accepted, and then it was found that the wily Jew was a "partner" in a "company" of ten "Koppje wallopers," to whom a single licence was issued on payment of

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10*l.*, or 1*l.* per head. This Jew, however, overreached himself for once, for on this anomaly coming to the knowledge of the Government the law was altered, making it compulsory for every individual, whether a member of a "firm" or not, to pay his 10*l.* The sequel was that the man who had made the bet was mobbed by his brother dealers.

"Diamond cut diamond" was the motto among these modern Israelites. "Partnerships" were entered into for other purposes besides cheating the revenue. A good story is told of a Hebrew named I——, a well-known dealer, and of good repute as the possessor of a conscience. Now the diamond buyers of those days did not know much of the value of the gems that were offered to them, and they gauged their worth by what other people were said to have offered for them; and when old I—— could not get his price for a stone, he would swear that he had been offered that price for it by another dealer. Now, it is always an accepted fact that when a Jew takes his oath he may be believed, at any rate, by his co-religionists, and many a wavering customer was induced to give the sum named on the assurance that it was a legitimate figure. But after a time it was found that I——'s prices were a great deal more than the market price, and the buyers could not realize any profit on their transactions with him, so several of them agreed together to price his diamonds but not buy, and they found that he asked very much more than any of them cared to give, telling each of them the same old tale that he had been offered his price by "a person in the trade." Who this mysterious person in the trade was, who was always ready to give high prices but never

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bought, they could not imagine; so they at last roundly told him that they would not believe him unless he produced the individual. In fact, they boycotted him; until he had to confess that he and his wife were partners, and that it was she who had priced his stones for him. This explanation cleared him of perjury, but lost him a great deal of custom, and he used to complain that no one but a Jew would have found him out.

But still the illicit buying and selling continued. "Vigilance Committees" were appointed by the miners, yet some of these self-elected detectives used their position rather to do a little business on their own account than with the object of discovering illicit dealing. Every other house in Kimberley was an hotel or a "canteen," the proprietors of which were often the greatest offenders. At that time a white woman in Kimberley was scarcer than a black swan in London, and when such a *rara avis* was seen she was greeted with shouts and war-dances, while the diggers gathered around her and not infrequently presented her with diamonds. But among the few "ladies" in the place was a Mrs. Pound, proprietress of the Richmond Hotel, which was a favourite resort of diamond buyers and diggers, under whose patronage mine hostess waxed rich, bank-notes becoming as plentiful as leaves on the trees. At last, however, she became so notorious that the Government was obliged to appoint her to the office of female inspector of the inside of the prison for a term of three years.

At that time, natives as well as whites were permitted to hold claims, but this right was taken away from them in 1875, when the Government took this

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matter out of the hands of the Miners' Committee, and appointed an official Mining Board, with a duly qualified surveyor. In the following year this board, with the object of abolishing the itinerant diamond-buyer, caused the penalty on buying without a licence to be raised from one to three years' imprisonment, with the addition of a fine of 500*l*. But the illicit buying still throve, and the penalty was soon afterwards raised to five years' imprisonment.

In 1881 the "share" mania set in, and companies were floated for as much as four times the value of the mines they were supposed to buy. Useless and valueless claims were put in for fabulous prices, some of which had never been diamond grounds. The public caught the infection, and bogus companies were floated, the shareholders in which, according to the proprietors, would soon realize enormous profits. But it was all imagination, and in less than a year over half of these companies were bankrupt—the working capital being completely swallowed up by the purchase of too expensive machinery, or in the vain endeavour to find diamonds where no diamonds had ever existed. Consequently the deluded shareholders cried out that the prospectuses were fraudulent, and attacked the promoters. But the promoters were equal to the occasion, and declared that the companies would have paid handsome dividends had it not been that the diamonds were stolen. This was a splendid defence, and, as some of the promoters were members of the board for the protection of the mining interest, they demanded further legislation; the result being that every dealer is compelled to keep a register of each diamond bought and sold, with particulars of its weight and of the

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person selling or buying it, to show his books to the detectives at all times, to render a monthly account of all his dealings, and to provide two sureties in the sum of 500*l.* each, which will be forfeited in case of his conviction, while the term of imprisonment has been increased from five to fifteen years. If a dealer's register shows that he has bought 5000 carats and sold 4000 carats, and the balance in his book is found on inspection to be under or over the difference of 1000 carats, he is liable to conviction, even though he may have lost some of his diamonds, or have given them away, or have had others given to him. The effect of all these restrictions is that the legitimate diamond-traders are being driven out of the place by necessity, as the illegitimate traders keep away from choice. The English element has left some time, and the trade is now in the hands of a few Germans. The number of inhabitants diminishes as the monopoly increases, and the end will be that Kimberley will subside into a one-horse town. Yet the I.D.B., as the "illicit diamond-buyer" is called, flourishes still. He does not patronize Kimberley by making that town his permanent residence, but lives just over the border, where the stringent laws enforced in Griqualand do not exist, and he will never be extirpated till the Orange Free State, the Cape Colony, Natal,—in fact, all parts of South Africa,—agree to adopt the same laws.

The Orange Free State border is only two miles from Kimberley, so that there are always plenty of opportunities of getting beyond the reach of the Diamond Trade Act. Now and then one of the regular I.D.B.'s gets caught. Not long before my arrival a man was arrested, just as he was getting into

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his cart to drive into Cape Colony, with 3 lbs. weight of diamonds neatly secured in his overcoat; but for one caught there are scores in the enjoyment of liberty. The chief of the suspects is a rich man who is a registered claim-owner and broker. A favourite plan among the fraternity is to form a company, and buy a cheap claim, or to work up some of the old stuff that was only hand-sorted in the early days of the industry, and put their stolen diamonds into their "wash up;" sometimes, however, they have been too eager to get rich, and have been found out by washing too many diamonds out of ground which was known to be poor.[2]

The Detective Department claims to have been successful not only in overtaking thieves of diamonds and receivers of stolen diamonds, but in capturing no less than 16,474½ carats weight of diamonds, valued at 32,471*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.*; but seeing that it costs 40,000*l.* a year, or 4*l.* per head on a population of 10,000, this is not a very magnificent result. It is admitted, however, on all hands that the captures represent but a small proportion of the diamonds successfully "run," as may be seen in the fact that a parcel in possession of one Joseph Jacobs, weighing 7162¾ carats, and valued at 12,000*l.*, had to be returned in consequence of a legal difficulty. But if the I.D.B.'s escape them, it is generally believed that the detectives make use of their powers in a reprehensible practice of trumping up cases, and endeavouring to trap people into purchasing diamonds illegally. Half of the time of

[2] The average value of a ton of good "blue" ground is about 30*s.*, and the cost of getting it about 2*s.* 6*d.* When the mines are in full swing, each of them will draw up 1000 loads a day.

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the police is taken up in finding out some individual whom they may choose to "suspect," and in getting up evidence to support their theory. Having marked down their prey, they will supply a nigger with diamonds, and tell him to go and "sell" them to you —taking care to search him beforehand to see that he has no money on his person. The nigger knocks at your door, and, while asking if you want to buy a horse or a cow, drops a stone on the door-mat, in payment for which he has already been told that he will find some money on the window-sill, or verandah, where the detective has accordingly secreted it. You do not want a horse or a cow, and order the nigger to be off. As he retires to pick up the money, another policeman at once searches him, finds he now has money on his person, and you are charged with having bought the diamond, which is of course found lying on the floor. On this evidence the smartest lawyer will not prevent you getting five years' hard labour.

One effect of such operations has been to encourage the natural craftiness of a native who has just been brought into touch with the "seamy side" of civilization. The Kaffir cannot understand the mixed treatment to which he is subjected. Those interested in encouraging the illicit diamond-trade employ him as a purveyor of stolen goods. Those interested in putting down the illegal traffic employ him as a spy to get innocent people convicted. And yet if a Kaffir happens to come into a town looking for work, and knowing nothing of the white man's laws innocently enters the streets "naked, and not ashamed," he is immediately arrested and "fined." Seeing that he wears no clothes, he cannot have a pocket, and, as he is

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innocent of either current coin or a cheque-book, he is locked up for a month in default of payment. When he comes out he profits by his lesson so far as to cover his legs with a pair of old pants, and civilization is satisfied; but, if he does not find a master the same day, he is again arrested as a "vagrant," and gets another day or two. The poor wretch is bewildered, and falls violently in love with the white man and his customs, and takes care to get somebody to give him a piece of paper certifying that he is in a situation. He then goes to seek for some Kaffir friends of his at the mines, and finds his way into a compound. Arrested for being there without permission, or with "unlawful intent," he is charged, fined, and eventually gravitates again to the prison. Having served his time, he will probably return to his "master," but finds that as he has been away "without leave" for a week his "occupation's gone" and the joyous round of the police-station, court-house, and prisoner's cell begins once more.

Yet with all this experience of civilization he hardly ever grumbles, but is always to be found, whether in the streets or at work, singing and laughing—an occupation, by the way, which comes much more naturally to him than manual labour of any kind.

The natives in Kimberley are principally Basutos and Zulus—fine, stalwart specimens of humanity. Seen at work in the mines, in all the sweet simplicity of their dark skins, they are living bronze statues—as fine models of the human form divine as one would wish to see; but when they go into the streets, they become supremely ridiculous: an old hat, the taller and more battered the better, is stuck on the top of a

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dirty rag with which they always bind up the head; and as a covering for the body there is the choice of an old sack with a hole in the bottom, and another on each side, for the head and arms to pass through, of a torn shirt, or of a dilapidated pair of unmentionables. Sometimes, indeed, a Kaffir may be seen in the full glory of two, or even all three, of these garments united in a complete suit; and on such a scarecrow Mrs. Grundy looks with complacency, while the "British Matron" declares that in her eyes it is a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever," with which no Andromeda or Aphrodite in the Royal Academy can compare.

But this by the way. While the law has aimed at the receiver of stolen goods—and the receiver who is always worse than the thief is in this case doubly so, because he is a white man, while the thief is black—the companies are endeavouring to reach the thief by hiring "green hands," from Natal and Zululand, uncontaminated by the Kimberley atmosphere, and by building compounds in which the labourers are to be required to agree to live before they are hired, so that they will be perpetually under surveillance.

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CHAPTER III.

The blasting of the blue—Down the crater—Searching the blacks—The washing-grounds—How the diamonds are unearthed—The sorting-tables—Judging the weight of a stone—Who are the diamond thieves?—Life in Kimberley—Its climate and its moral atmosphere—The mining pioneer.

One day Mr. English, the manager of the Standard Company, took us to see the "blasting of the blue."

We took our place in a large iron bucket big enough to hold a ton of earth, suspended by four grooved wheels, two on each side, from two stout iron wires, which, supported at each end by wooden props, ran in a straight line down the steep slope for the distance of some 150 yards.

The shots are fired at dinner-time, when all the men are out of the mine, and it was a curious sight to see a long line of naked blacks clambering up a narrow, steep path from the lowest depths, 350 feet below: they looked at the distance like an army of ants in single file, or rather, with their shiny skins, like a stream of black water pouring up-hill.

"I wish I had my camera here," said Lulu; "I should like to have a picture of that human tide."

"I would much rather have what those black thieves are bringing out with them," said Mr. English. "Naked as they are, and closely searched as they will be before they leave the workings, they will carry off some hundreds of pounds' worth between them."

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"But how can they secrete the stones, if they have no clothes?"

"Their hair will be searched, their ears examined, and every man will open his mouth for inspection, and perhaps not a single stone will be found: they carry them in a pretty safe place, for they swallow them. It is as much as a man's liberty is worth to have a diamond in his possession without a permit or a licence to purchase; but the temptation is too great. I once knew a man to have a forty-carat stone in his possession: he was arrested and searched, but it could not be found. He had swallowed it, and so was put into prison under strict surveillance, and when there managed to swallow it a second time; but on dejecting it a second time he was detected, and is now doing his ten years on Cape Town breakwater.

"Sometimes the overseers are in league with the black diggers, so that it is most difficult to detect the thieves. Once we tried convict labour, which seemed to work admirably, till one day the gun of one of the overseers was found loaded with a full charge of diamonds for shot. A favourite trick of the I.D.B.'s was to commit a trivial offence so as to get into gaol for a day or two, when they had splendid opportunities of buying from the convicts and the overseers."

By this time the bell was ringing as a signal that the shot was ready to be fired. In a few minutes afterwards a lurid flash was seen amid a great discharge of dust and stones mingled with smoke, followed by a long, low reverberation; then two, three, four blasts followed one another in rapid succession, and some tons of hard blue clay were loosened ready to be carried to the "floors."

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"What a grand picture that would have made!" cried Lulu. "If I could only get a photograph of an explosion like that 'taken from life'!"

"Why, the concussion would smash your plates, if not your lens," I replied. "You might as well sit on the top of Vesuvius and wait for an eruption, and expect to get safely down again."

Presently the black labourers came back, and began loading the earth that had been loosened by the explosion into the big iron buckets, in which it was hauled up the wire tramway, one bucket going up full and another coming down empty. We returned the same way we had come—in one of these big buckets—the usual method of ascent and descent. Sometimes a mistake is made in the signals and the passengers are dumped like dirt down a shoot some twenty feet deep. I was determined not to be thus ignominiously treated if I could help it, and took the precaution of making myself as conspicuous as possible, and of seizing the wire as we approached the summit; but fortunately we were served with the respect due to animated earth, and the brake put on in good time.

The hard, flinty clay cannot be treated at once. It is left exposed for a time to the atmosphere on the "floors." Some of these are ten or fifteen acres in extent, and each company has altogether hundreds of acres for the treatment of the earth. In the wet season the rain assists disintegration; but in the dry weather the process is hastened by frequent sprinklings with water from a hose; and when the lumps begin to get soft a harrow is run over the mass. It is just like irrigating and cultivating a farm, only the seed is gold and the crops are diamonds.

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It takes about three months before the stuff is fit to wash, when it is loaded into iron boxes running on a narrow tramway, and hauled away by horses up an incline to the washing-machine. Here each little trolly dumps its load into a hopper, from which it is passed over a grating just narrow enough to retain the large stones. Here a man stands with a hose, and gives the "blue" a good dosing, so that it falls away in the form of liquid mud into the "washers" underneath. These are circular pans about eighteen inches deep, in which revolve four paddles armed with teeth, driven by steam-power. All the gravel and stones sink to the bottom, and the mud flows off, carrying with it the lighter *débris*, into a small canal, which conducts it to a reservoir where a bucket-pump lifts the muddy water to the upper level, where it is again utilized, while the precipitated mud is carried away by trams, and goes to swell the size of the great embankment of *débris* outside.

As the rotary workers get filled with stones a little iron tram-car is drawn underneath them, and the contents emptied into it. The car is then locked up, run up another incline to another hopper, where it deposits its precious burden, which undergoes a second washing in another water. This consists of a long cylinder formed in sections, each about six feet long, and composed of wirework, the meshes of each section gradually increasing in size. Above the cylinder runs a pipe, perforated with quarter-inch holes two inches apart, through which water constantly flows. As the cylinder rotates the smallest stones fall through the first section, the next size through the second, and so on till the largest stones only are left to reach the

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further end, where two men are on the watch for the big diamonds.

The stones, thus roughly sorted according to size, fall from the cylinder into a row of boxes called the "pulsator," into which water is forced through a valve in the bottom, thus carrying off all light refuse matter, leaving the diamonds and gravel at the bottom, whence they are periodically dropped into an iron box with a sieve bottom, in which they are carried by two blacks to a hydrant and subjected to a final cleansing by a strong stream of water, before being taken to the sorting-shed adjoining.

Here, at a row of tables, sit the sorters, scraping the heaps of gravel towards them with a piece of tin, picking out the diamonds and putting them into the bottom of a broken beer-bottle at their side.

The very small stuff—that which passes through the finest part of the cylinder—is sorted three or four times, and even then all the stones are not secured, so small are they. I took up a handful from a refuse heap, and picked out two tiny crystals—both perfect octahedrons, though hardly visible.

It would be a great advantage if some method could be devised for treating the blue earth as soon as it is blasted, and the inventor will make a fortune who constructs a machine that will obviate the necessity for hauling the stuff backwards and forwards to and from the vast irrigation floors. These are too extensive to be fenced in, and have to be watched night and day; and the cost of this, added to the cost of haulage, is one of the principal items of expense.

Some steps towards concentrating the various processes have already been taken, the Central Company

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having a machine in which the rotary washer and the "pulsator" are combined; but the great desideratum is a means of doing away with what I call the "irrigation floors."

When the wash-up is finished, the manager comes along, picks up the broken bottles, turns the contents out into his hand, and puts them into his pocket, to take them to the office, where they are sorted and classed according to the following order:—

1. Crystals (perfect octahedrons).
2. Cape whites.
3. First by-waters (light yellow).
4. Second by-waters (dark yellow).
5. Mélées (mixed, from two carats down).
6. Mackerel (flat stones).
7. Cleavage (stones with flaws, spots, &c.).
8. Chips (broken pieces).
9. Fancies (stones that are neither white nor yellow, but brown, pink, grey, or black. Some of them are valuable, when perfect, because of their rarity.
10. Refections (rubbish).
11. Boart (a kind of compound diamond, nearly black, used for cutting and polishing other stones).

There is a stone called "smoky diamond," which nearly always breaks to pieces when exposed to the light. I saw one break in the sorter's hands. All sorts of means have been tried to preserve them—such as putting them into potatoes, &c.—but without effect.

The average value of the stones as they come from the mine is about 1*l.* per carat. The crystals, some of which are equal to the best Brazilian stones, are worth from 3*l.* to 8*l.* in the rough; others from 5*s.* to 3*l.* per carat. Picking up one or two stones I asked their

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weight and value, and then guessed the weight of others, hitting it off to the sixteenth of a carat—to the astonishment of the manager, who said there were not two dealers on the fields that could guess the weight so closely.

"You'd better not be too clever," said Lulu, "or you'll be had up for an I.D.B. next."

The minutiæ of the system of diamond-digging at Kimberley may perhaps not be so interesting to my readers as to me: one of my objects in coming to South Africa was to discover a diamond-mine—what success attended my search will be related further on—and it was necessary for me to know how to work my mine when I discovered it. Whatever else I might do, I felt competent to "run" a mine when I came across it, and I fancied I could deal even with the I.D.B. difficulty quite easily. Having carefully watched the blacks at work in the mine and on the washing-floors, I could not bring myself to believe that they had much to do with stealing the million sterling worth of diamonds that are said to be stolen yearly. I tried to steal a diamond myself, that is to say, I looked most carefully, time after time, over the "blue" as it lay on the irrigation floors, in the hope of seeing a stone, but failed, and it did not seem to me possible, except on the rarest chance, for a nigger to find a diamond between the time of blasting and the sorting-table. Still, I came to the conclusion that anybody who owns a diamond-mine had better work it himself, if he is to be free from the nightmare of "I.D.B." Of course, the organization of the companies has tended to economy of labour and increase of efficiency, but it has removed all the direct personal supervision of the

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actual owners. When one sees the *nonchalant* way in which the managers toss the result of the day's wash-up into their waistcoat-pocket, one remembers the princely pay they receive, and reflects that such salaries would keep a professional thief honest. Of course, therefore, it can't be the overseers and managers; I don't believe it's the niggers; so it seems difficult to understand how anything like a million's worth of diamonds can be stolen yearly. Neither can I understand that in the fifteen years of Kimberley some 45,000,000*l.* have been dug out of the ground, and yet there are not three wealthy people in the town.

The evil of the I.D.B. will no doubt be to some extent checked by the tendency of the companies to amalgamate under pressure of the reef difficulty and of the peculiarities in the natural formation of the mine. The result of amalgamation would be that the diamonds would pass through fewer hands, and that there would consequently be fewer facilities for the operations of the I.D.B.'s. Concentration, however, means monopoly, and monopoly means a diminution of that competition which has made Kimberley what it is. It has been said that "God made the country and man the town," to which may be added that diamonds made Kimberley, for I cannot conceive of anybody making Kimberley his home who was not attracted thither by the lustre of its reputation as a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground. Not that I mean to say that I.D.B.'s are a desirable, or even a necessary, institution; but that, when the whole business of diamond-mining and diamond-selling is under the absolute control of a small body of monopolists, the money that is eventually realized will change hands elsewhere than at Kimberley,

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and what that town gains in respectability she will lose in importance and population.

The climate, as a climate, may not be unhealthy, but the country, waterless and almost treeless, has no charms in itself. In the summer the thermometer is frequently as high as 140° in the sun, and has been known as high as 150°. The streets are in a state of nature, and when a trek-waggon, with its four-score hoofs, ploughs through the dust, you might as well be in a sandstorm on the Sahara at once. When the wind blows across the heaps of *débris* from the mines, the town is filled with clouds of white dust like a petrified London fog, that fairly blinds and chokes you. As for houses, the tin-kettle establishments reflect the rays of the sun outwardly, and bottle them up inwardly, so that it is hard to say whether the stifling heat of the interior or the blinding glare of the exterior is the worse. As for provisions, the following is a list of some of the prices ruling when I was there :—

Potatoes, 22*s.* per bag.
Oats, 32*s.* per bag.
Maize, 52*s.* per bag.
Large sacks of straw, used as forage (called chaff), weighing 160 lbs., 21*s.*
Grapes, 1*s.* per lb.
Melons, from 1*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* each.
Tobacco, 2*s.* 6*d.* a roll of 2½ lbs.
Wheat, 36*s.* per sack of 200 lbs.
Onions, 22*s.* per bag.
Small fowls, from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.*
Wood was dearer than all else. A load of about 1000 lbs. sold for 18*l.* to 20*l.*, and at one time would have fetched 40*l.*

As to the moral atmosphere of Kimberley, what I have said will sufficiently show that it cannot be classed as very first-rate. It may be said that there

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are but three really flourishing institutions in the town—the Detective Department, the cemetery, and the gaol; but, notwithstanding that I would sum up the character of the place in that way, I must join issue with the sweeping statements made by a recent writer on the subject. Mr. Stanley Little, in his book on "South Africa," says of Kimberley, that "from beginning to end the diamond-fields of South Africa have been the hot-beds of rowdyism, and all that is revolting in human nature may be found there. The libertines, forgers, bird-catchers, and outcasts of Europe have found an asylum there, as in Alsatia of old. The Houndsditch Jew and the London rough reign supreme. . . . The bully is in the ascendant, he lords it over all. As to the moneyed men on the fields, is it a libel to say that most of them owe their wealth either to illicit diamond-buying or to taking advantage of the necessities or inexperience of unfortunate diggers? . . . The social life of Kimberley has become so utterly low and repugnant, that the decent man at length flies from it in disgust, as he would from the confines of a lazar-house. The vices of drinking, swearing, cursing, bullying, lying, cheating, and all kinds of utter abomination permeate society, I was going to say from top to bottom, but in such a community one can scarcely say which is the top and which is the bottom."

Like Denver or Leadville, San Francisco or Bathurst, and other great mining centres which have held out the hope of sudden wealth to the digger, Kimberley has attracted numbers of the very scum and dregs of mankind; but, in applying the above expressions to Kimberley in its present state, I am bound

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to say that Mr. Little somewhat lets his zeal outrun his discretion—or rather his imagination ride rough-shod over facts. The description given by him may have been true enough in the first days of diamond-digging. The class of desperado that he pictures as the sole denizen of the fields is the pioneer of all unappropriated lands whose mineral riches hold out the prospect of immediate fortune to the first-comer. The better class of people will not rough it, or take the desperate chances of a great rush. But as the population increases, and the mining population is succeeded by provision-dealers, builders, engineers, and so forth, as the success of the "rush" is permanently established, laws become necessary, rooting out the extreme rough and making the place tolerable for a better class of people, who come to invest as well as to dig. The single digger, working on his own luck, is tempted to surrender his claim for ready cash, and the claims get into fewer hands; the provident digger, who sees a prospect of making a profit by steady work, remains; whilst the "last chance" man rushes off on another forlorn hope; and so order is gradually evolved out of chaos. Hence, whatever Kimberley may have been, its present condition is not so bad as is pictured by Mr. Little. It is true that the extraordinary opportunities of theft which a diamond-mine must always offer cannot fail to attract an unusual number of blacklegs and vagabonds with an eye to the off-chance. A valuable pebble can be easily secreted on the person, or even swallowed at a pinch, and hence Kimberley may be expected to always have more than its fair proportion of dregs among its humanity. But I have met there some of

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the kindest, most straightforward, hospitable, and educated gentlemen, who are doing all they can to improve the tone of the place.

Not that there is not room for such efforts. In the anxiety to become rich even the finest consciences become dulled, the most delicate susceptibilities are blunted—and the more delicate and the finer a thing is the more likely it is to suffer from contact with the rough and the rude. "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and though a man with gentlemanly feelings and delicate instincts is horrified at the surroundings of a newly developed "diggings," yet constant contact—even constant warfare—with them can hardly fail to have a baneful effect on his normal standard of morality. Yet to apply to such men the opprobrious epithets quoted above is a libel—none the less serious because promiscuous and not individual.

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CHAPTER IV.

A dangerous experiment—A mimic volcano in eruption—Packing up—Starting for the Kalahari—A Bastard encampment—A big bag of partridges—Making friends with the Boers—A good investment—A South African Crusoe—"Lots of trees"—A massacre of the innocents.

GOING back to the hotel one day, after spending the morning listening to Mr. English's explanation of the ins and outs of diamond-mining, I missed Lulu and his camera. It was about noon, the hour at which the dinner-bell rings. "He's off after that mad scheme of photographing the blast," I thought; and, hurrying out, met the overseer, who told me that my surmise was correct. He had warned Lulu of the danger of making the attempt; but the impetuous youth had made up his mind, and nothing could stop him. Hastening down to the mine, I reached the edge of the reef just as the first discharge took place, and the air was so full of smoke and dust that I could not see to the bottom of the crater. As the air cleared, I turned my glasses down the pit, and there, right away at the bottom, looking at that distance not much bigger than a child, stood Lulu, holding the tripod. "Boom!" went another explosion; and a perfect hail of gravel, mingled with huge chunks of clay, fell around him. When next I saw him he was on one knee, still close to the camera. "He must be hurt," I thought. "Why did he not take shelter in one of those

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iron tramcars into which the men who fire the time-fuse retire?" I was about to run down to him, when out thundered the roar of another charge. Once more the storm of dust and stone, rising some 300 or 400 feet into the air, concealed him from my view for some moments. Then I could see that one of the legs of the tripod was broken. Yet, holding it with one hand, he was changing the plate with the other. I admired his pluck—which I had never doubted—but I did not think any picture in the world worth such a risk. There was a pile of timber beside him. Surely he would try and take shelter behind this before another explosion occurred? But no! There he stood, patiently waiting for the discharge, as calmly as if he were in his studio at home. Another tongue of flame, another cloud of dust and *débris*, another thundering roar, and a fresh charge, apparently heavier than all the others, was fired. I could wait no longer. Without stopping to see the result, I hurried down, fearful for his safety if regardless of my own. But fortunately this was the last discharge. He was unhurt; only the tripod was broken.

"You see that big rock there," he said, pointing to a piece about as big as a table. "That was among the lot that fell when the leg of the tripod was smashed. I thought the whole camera was gone, and what a fix we should be in, for we could not get another in this country."

"Never mind the camera," I said. "If it had hit you, what a fix I should have been in. I couldn't get another Lulu in this country, or any other."

"Ah, well! never mind that. Just hold this while I take the camera off the stand. I think I've got

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some splendid views, especially after the last shot, with all the dust and stuff in the air. In this strong light it ought to come out splendidly. It is the only picture of the kind, and was worth a leg—let alone a tripod—to secure."

It was terribly hot, standing in that artificial crater, the sides of which reflected the burning rays of the red-hot mid-day sun. The "trucks" would not be running for an hour, and lunch would be waiting for us before then; so there was nothing for it but to shoulder the camera and plate-holders and to scramble up the steep sides, following the tracks which the bare-footed Kaffirs had trodden in their journeys up and down.

"I'm frying!" exclaimed Lulu, as, half-way up, he threw himself on a rock. "We shall be quite roasted before we get to the top."

"But think of the pictures," I replied, trying to look cool, though I confess to never having felt hotter outside a Turkish bath.

That night the waggon was finished, and brought round to the market square, and directly afterwards the message came that the mules had been newly shod, and were all waiting at the farm, with their driver "Jan." Jan was a half-breed "boy," formerly in the employment of Mr. Caldecott, from whom I "bought" him along with the mules. This "boy" was flat-nosed, bald-headed, round-shouldered, of the mature age of about forty-five, small of stature, with big brown eyes set in a wrinkled face, which was fringed with lanky, unkempt black hair. He was a native of St. Helena, and at a short distance so nearly resembled a European as to clearly indicate the existence of European blood in his veins. Everything

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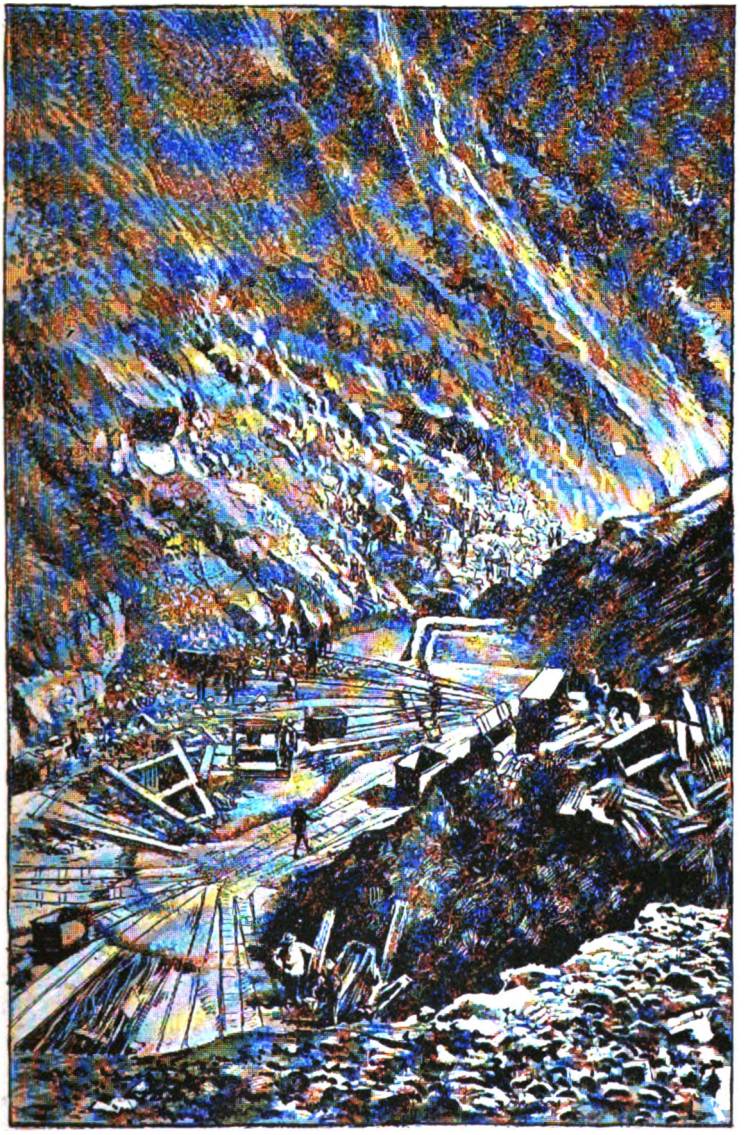

VIEW FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE DIAMOND MINE.

Page 44.

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being ready, we determined to begin packing at once, and to start for the Kalahari to-morrow.

Dozens of idlers thronged round the waggon as we packed our goods and chattels, asking all kinds of questions, making all sorts of suggestions, and generally getting as much fun out of the performance as possible. Lulu took charge of the packing arrangements, being a good hand at it, from having travelled so much—though under different circumstances from the present. His leading principle was to pack everything on the top, so that it would be handy; but with all his skill he found that something had to go to the bottom first. Some of the articles, indeed, went below the bottom; for the pots and pans, kettles and pails, shovels and picks, *et hoc genus omne*, were hung to rings underneath the waggon. A kind of boot, called a trap, hung down behind, one end being fastened to the axle-tree, and the other by a chain to the platform or flap at the back. Here we stowed a bag of corn and chaff, or what is called chaff in the colony, that is, plain wheat straw, which the mules eat when mixed with mealies. It would be useful in case we came to a place where there was no grass. On the platform was fastened a tin box, with a surplus stock of utensils and other articles not immediately wanted, with my saddle on top; and beside it were strapped the bags of blankets, and two bundles of clothes belonging to Kert and the mule-drivers. The interior was devoted to our more valuable possessions, such as Lulu's camera and paraphernalia, our drug-chest, provisions, guns, and ammunition. The box of cartridges took four strong men to lift—8000 or 9000 rounds altogether; but yet I did not think we had any too much, so I telegraphed to Cape

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Town for a permit to buy 1000 more. Getting no answer, I solicited Dr. Sauer's help, and he and three friends kindly got permits for 250 each, which they handed over to me. At last everything was ready, and, mounting my mare, I gave the word to start. Slash went the fish-poles, and away went the mules; what with the shouts of the bystanders, and what with Jan's vigorous whipping, the spirited animals went off at a flying pace round the market corner.

"There go six splendid mules," I heard one man exclaim as I rode after them; and they well deserved the compliment. With such willing beasts the whip-hand would surely find he had quite an unaccustomed sinecure.

Before we had gone many miles I began to feel sore, not having been on horseback for so many years, and, dismounting, tied the mare to the tail, and took my seat inside the waggon.

Presently we passed a Kaffir—not a very unusual circumstance in this Kaffir-peopled country; but Jan somehow thought there was something suspicious in the way he said *Goen daag* (good day), and in the fact that he kept following us. So, as it was getting dark, and not much light to be expected from the new moon, he stopped, and got down to see that everything was safe.

"Look," he said, "the *reims* (raw hide straps) that tie up the saddle and the big box are cut! The Kaffir has done this." As he spoke we saw the Kaffir run off the road, and make for a *koppje* close by, which we took to be pretty fair presumptive evidence of his guilt.

We now kept a sharp look-out for a light, for,

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though the mules kept well to the road, dark as it was, we were anxious to get settled for our first night before it got much later. Presently Jan cried, "There's a light, boss." As we neared it we heard voices singing with considerable harmony, and found it was a party of Bastards camping by the roadside: four men and five women, making quite a picturesque group as they sat around the fire, their dark faces shining in the ruddy light, and the bright colours of the women's garments relieving the black background of the night.

"Goen daag, nef und nechey (good day, nephew and niece); how far is it to Steyne's farm?" Strangers, if your inferiors, are always nephew and niece in South Africa; while your superiors, or those whom you wish to treat as such, are your uncle and aunt.

"About half an hour farther on; but there is no grass there, so you had better outspan before you reach the farm."

And so, with "Thank you," and "Good night," we left them to their hymns again, their clear voices rising melodious over the plain as we rattled along. After riding a couple of miles or so we came in sight of another light, which we took for that of the farm-house, and outspanned, cooked our supper over a fire made of dried cow's-dung, made our beds inside the waggon, by laying four planks across from seat to seat, with the cushions and blankets over them, and slept as soundly as if we were in the most luxurious hotel in London or New York; while Kert and Jan made themselves equally comfortable on the ground-floor—underneath the waggon. It was too warm at first to need any covering; but towards morning it

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turned very cool, and we were glad to put our blankets over instead of under us.

The first rays of daylight awoke me, and I walked over a large flat with my gun, but saw nothing, and returned just in time for a breakfast of chops and coffee—the latter made with coffee essence and condensed milk. I often wonder how travellers managed to get along in the olden days before the invention of "tinned" this, "condensed" that, and "essence" or "extract" of the other.

Leaving the others to inspan, I walked on ahead with my shot-gun, and not far from the farm came to a water-hole, at the roadside, in which something was moving which looked like snipe. Stealing along under cover of the bushes till within easy range, I was just about to fire, when a loud screaming broke out in the air above, and in a few minutes a large flock of birds circled round and round directly overhead and alighted in the road. For ten minutes they sat there, and then, as if urged on by a common impulse, ran to the water and commenced drinking as if they had had no water for days. They were Namaqua partridges, of which I had seen specimens in an aviary at Kimberley. Unsportsmanlike, I emptied my first barrel at them as they drank, and then let fly the second as they rose. While picking them up, Kert joined me. He had heard my shots, and ran forward to help.

"Boss kaan bangeskit" ("Boss can shoot well"), he said with delight as we counted the bag. There were twenty-three of them.

Going up to the house, a Boer met us and put out his hand, as a Boer will always do, even if he meets you a dozen times in a day.

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"Goen daag, hom."

"Goen daag, hom," I replied, grasping his hand. "Es joe naam Steyne?"

"Na, ek es Van Moop. Who are you?"

"I am an American, come to see your country, and to shoot." But I found it necessary to explain where and what America was—that it was on the other side of the big sea; and when I added that it was once an English colony, but that the people fought against the English and beat them and gained their independence, I was certain of a welcome. To insure their friendship it was enough to talk of "independence" and "beating the English." Their love of the one and their hatred of the other were equally strong, and, it may fairly be added, equally unmeaning. I did not tell them that "independence" in America meant progress, and not stagnation, or worse; or that, having beaten the English once, we could be friendly with them afterwards. The Boer's one desire for the future is to be left alone in his dirt and sloth; his one retrospective glance at glory is at the battle of Majuba Hill; his one hero is the leader of the Boer forces at that fight, Joubert, whose portrait hangs in the place of honour in every Africander's house.

My new friend, Van Moop, took us into the house, where we shook hands all round; and then began a string of questions. How about the war? Had the Boers left Rooi Grond? Had they defeated General Warren? Were the English going to make war in the Transvaal?—for if they did, he added, there would be a general uprising of Boers all over South Africa.

But we were more in want of water than of political vapourings. So as water was scarce here, we were glad

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to move on again towards Scholtz Dam. On the road we passed an ostrich-farm, with about twenty birds, old and young, feeding on the open flat, without any attempt at enclosure. Close by we overtook the party of Bastards whom we had passed the night before, with a light spring-waggon, like our own, but drawn by a team of twelve oxen, and arriving at the Dam found nearly a dozen teams all outspanned together, on their way to Kimberley with timber from the other side of the Vaal River. While watering the mules and cooking our dinner, a couple of rough-looking fellows came up, whom I took for Boers, and addressed in my bad Dutch.

"We can't talk that stuff," they replied in Cockney English, "although we've been two years in Kimberley. We got sick of the dust and heat, and have been up to the Vaal, with these wood-trekkers, to spend a week under the trees and enjoy a swim. You don't know what water is till you've been baked in an oven like Kimberley for a year or two!"

I gave them a drink of Cango brandy, which they seemed to relish—internally—quite as much as the water externally, and for which they expressed their everlasting obligations.

In the meantime the Bastards had gone on ahead of us, and though we followed them within an hour, we did not catch them till near the Vaal River. At Smidt's Drift, or Ford, Jan, standing on the edge of the river, cracked his whip several times as a signal to the man in charge of the pont, and in about an hour we were on the other side of the Vaal, at a cost of three half-crowns. For a good investment commend me to a "pont" in a good situation. An old scow and a

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length of stout wire do not cost much to fix up, and the wages of two Kaffirs are not much in the way of "working expenses." Smidt's "pont" often clears as much as 20*l.* a day when the river is high; and altogether he must have made a good thing of it since he came here, fifteen years ago, quite a poor man. Now he is quite a prosperous landed proprietor. Besides his "pont," he owns a winkel, or store, in which you can buy nearly everything, and an hotel, "replete with every comfort," of course. Sometimes the river rises to such a height that the "pont" is unworkable, and then the hotel comes in very handy, both to mine host and his guests. When Mr. Rhodes, Mr. H. S. Orpen, M.L.A., Mr. N. C. Hinton and others were here in 1881 to open the present road, the river became full to overflowing, so that the house stood on an island, and they were kept prisoners for some days. The event is celebrated in the following verses, written by Mr. Rhodes at the time, and religiously preserved by the hero of them:—

"On an island quite small,
In the midst of the Vaal,
We found William Smidt like a Crusoe.
We thought that confounded
He'd be when surrounded,
Because the Vaal River it grew so.

"But we lived on the best,
In his isle of the blest,
You may wonder now how we could do so.
If you want to know why,
You have only to try,
For old Smidt is a wonderful Crusoe."

Besides his other undertakings, Mr. Smidt has a farm, irrigated from a large spring, which bursts out

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on the top of a rise and waters the lower lands, where grapes and melons grow to perfection. When we left, the jolly old Hollander loaded us with the choicest specimens, and in the midst of that barren desert, with every blade of grass eaten off close as far as you can see—as is the case at every outspanning place—we all agreed that we had never seen finer or tasted more delicious fruit.

Perhaps *the* feature of the place is the church which Mynheer has built—as a set-off, I suppose, to his exorbitant "pont" toll.

Having patronized the store to the extent of purchasing 10 lbs. of coffee—which we saw ground, in order to make sure that it was all coffee—and some onions to flavour our partridge soup—for we found that to eat our game broiled required too much jaw-exercise,—we started at daylight, and about 11 a.m. outspanned again at Tweefontein, where is a small dam, fed by a tiny rivulet about six inches wide and two inches deep, springing from a rock. The whole country hereabout is very rocky and stony, with here and there a camel-tree (*camel boom*), the timber of which is known as stink-wood, and a very good name too, as I found on cutting a bullet out of one. This tree takes root wherever there is a little sand, and will remain green for years without rain—showing, I think, that there must be underground water. It is very unsociable in its habits, not growing in clumps, but singly; and I could not help laughing when my old Bushman cried out, "Look! what lots of trees; here is plenty of wood." What the old man would say were he to see an American forest it is difficult to tell, but his innocent exclamation bore striking testi-

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mony to the general scarcity of wood in this part of Africa. On the opposite hill were three tents of wood-cutters from Kimberley, who will soon have to go further and further away to supply that market. As it is, when we were in Kimberley wood was selling at 20*l.* a load.

While talking to the owner of the dam, whose small mud house with the curious little huts of the Kaffir servants stood close to the water, Lulu called out to me to look at the partridges: and there, over the hill, were covey after covey of them, from six to a hundred birds each, evidently coming down to the water. As I ran to the waggon for my gun and some No. 8 cartridges the whirr of their wings quite filled the air.

"They are coming here to drink," said the Boer, "thousands come every morning. You get behind that big bush and watch; the water is so narrow that they will line both sides of it, and if you wait a bit you can shoot a great many at once."

These people have an eye to the economy of powder and shot; but I had already tried my hand at the "massacre" business and would have preferred to take the birds on the wing. It was as much as I could do to resist so many splendid shots as the birds flew towards me and dropped in the open among the loose stones. There they sat sometimes four or five minutes before creeping up to the edge of the water which was getting so thickly lined with them, that I was beginning to lose patience.

"Wait till I tell you to fire," said the Boer, "there are more coming. That big covey will soon join;" and so to please him I waited.

"Now fire!"—"Bang" went one barrel right down

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the line of drinking birds; "Bang," again, went the other barrel at them as, with a sharp screech and a loud whirr of the wings, they rose in a dense cloud. From those two shots we picked up fifty-two dead and wounded birds; and yet directly afterwards they came back, covey after covey, every few minutes. This time I fired at them as they came, and would knock down sometimes four or five, sometimes only two, or one, at every shot; only failing to kill three times. In an hour and a half I had killed 260 altogether. Giving half the "bag" to the Boer, I went to breakfast, which was waiting, more hungry than the proverbial hunter; and spoiled at least three ordinary London appetites before crying, "Hold! enough!"

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CHAPTER V.

Something like a hot day—How it rains in South Africa—Our first antelope—At Campbell—An aged Griqua chieftainess—Mr. Bartlett's garden—"Born Tired"—A talk with Mr. Virtue—Farmers' troubles in South Africa—Shooting a koran—After the spring-bok—Sunday morning at Griqua Town—A Boer's homestead—Interviewing the Commissioner—The ex-Chief of the Griquas—We visit the "oldest inhabitant"—The country drying up.

ALL hands commenced picking the birds, and the ground looked as if a feather-bed had been emptied out of a fourth-storey window, as the wind caught the feathers and carried them out among the rocks and stones. The whole of the partridges had to be cleaned and slightly salted before we started, otherwise they would soon go bad. The heat was terrific. I told Kert to lay a few of the birds on the baked rock, for they would surely cook there, without a fire. Two places on my hand were burned to a blister. Not in Cuba nor in the East Indies had I ever experienced such a scorching blaze of sunlight. The wind was blowing pretty strong, yet hardly seemed to temper the heat, which, but for it, would have been absolutely unendurable. But suddenly the clouds began to roll up from the west; the lightning flashed and the thunder drew nearer and nearer. The men hastened to inspan the mules and turn them and the waggon round so that they would stand with their

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backs to the storm. But hardly had they finished when down came the rain in torrents. Lulu and I jumped into the waggon, and it required all our strength to hold down the curtain to keep the rain from blowing in and spoiling everything. For a quarter of an hour the storm of wind and rain raged with the utmost fury. It was as if a waterspout had burst upon us. Presently we peeped out and saw Kert and Jan at the mules' heads, holding them in to prevent them from bolting to seek shelter behind some rocks; the poor fellows were drenched to the skin. The ribbons and feathers in old Kert's hat, of which he was very proud, were dreadfully woebegone and bedraggled; but when I called out to him, "What will you do?" he replied quite cheerfully,—

"Ek es *ein man*, oons moet loop." ("I am a man, we must go on.")

And so he proposed that, as the mules would not drive against the storm, he would lead them while Jan kept their spirits up with the whip.

"It's only seven miles," he said, "to Campbell (pronounced Camel), and we cannot get any wetter than we are." As there was no gainsaying that philosophy, and nothing to gain by staying, we started, Lulu and I sitting in the waggon with our guns between our legs, and holding up a waterproof apron to keep us dry. The roads were a little rough in places, but in good condition compared with the usual country-roads in America. Here and there the grades were pretty stiff and slippery, owing to the recent rains, but the six little mules stuck gamely to their work, and it was wonderful to see the way they pulled their heavy load, especially when we came to a steep *kloof* or

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ravine, partly filled with water, where, what between the stones and the mud, the foothold was very bad.

We frequently saw the turtle-dove, both in the road and among the bushes, and shot three or four; and as we were passing through a flat covered with thick bushes an antelope jumped into the road right ahead of us, and stood still half a second. As he started I raised my rifle, and, aiming about three inches ahead of him, struck him just behind the shoulder, the bullet, a lead one with a copper centre, making a hole as large as one's hand.

Kert was delighted at bagging the first antelope. "Boss, det es ein Duiker. Jo het hom skit licher." Throwing him—the antelope, not Kert—into the boot, we continued our journey, and soon after came to the first stubble-field I had seen. It was barely two acres in extent, and what was my astonishment to see a brand-new Johnson's reaper standing in one corner. Could it be possible, that this machine had been imported to cut two acres? or was it brought in anticipation of more extended cultivation?—the only sign of which was a little patch of green corn close by.

Some fig-trees planted along the road, and watered by a streamlet, showed that we were nearing a settlement, and in an hour we rounded a cultivated field, and drove up a hill into Campbell. Seeing an old man looking out of the door of an old thatched house, facing a large tree which stood on a patch of green grass—actually green grass, and this was the first rain for over a year!—I asked for and obtained permission to outspan there.

"Now, boys, quick! out with the mules, and then here's a nip of brandy to go with the water, for you

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must be wet through!" The brandy was strong enough to strangle me—though its odour, like that of muscatels, was really delicious—but they drank it neat, and considered it quite a set-off to their long tramp through the rain.

Having seen a fire lighted, and some steak set to cook, I went to the old man I had first spoken to, and offered to buy some milk. He had no cows, he said; but referred me to his neighbour, whose dark skin, crinkly hair, and little tuft of beard and

HOUSE WHERE LIVINGSTONE FIRST SAW MARY MOFFAT.

moustache, proclaimed black blood in his veins. His name, he said, was Bartlett, and he was son of the first missionary of that name, who had built the house in which he lived, at the same time that he built the mission-house, on a piece of land granted to him for the purpose by old Orontes Waterboer, the former chief of the Griquas. Here, he informed me, Livingstone and Moffat stayed for some time in the year 1869, and it was here that Livingstone first saw Moffat's daughter Mary, whom he married at Kuruman, and who after-

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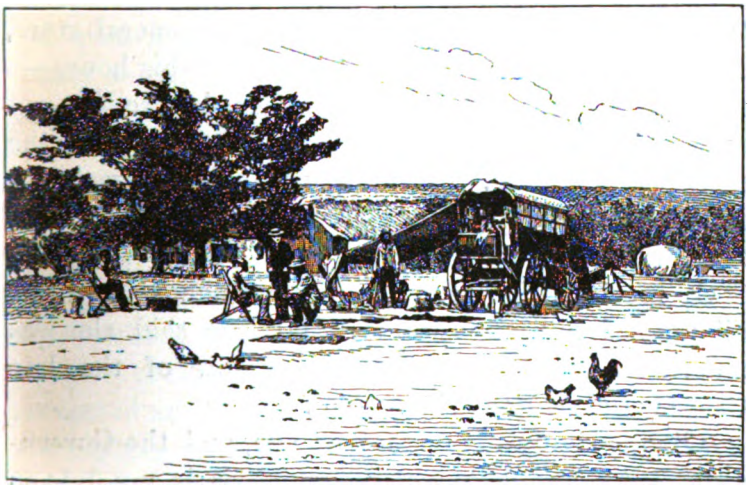
wards nearly perished from thirst on the way to Lake N'Gami. Of both these historic buildings Lulu took photographs, which are reproduced in the accompanying cuts.

There is no missionary or minister here now, as the society requires the missions to be self-supporting after a time, and when a certain number of converts have been made the missionaries move on to new



MR. BARTLETT'S HOUSE AT CAMPBELL, AND PAUPER QUEEN'S HUT.

districts, so that those who require a "sky-pilot" have to pay for one. So far as I could find in the places I passed through, nobody ever seems to want one so badly as that.

Returning to the waggon I passed a miserable little hut, without a door, into which curiosity tempted me to peep, and I was astonished to find it was inhabited. A haggard old woman lay crouched in a corner on a bundle of skins, and hastily covered her face as she

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saw me look in; so I hurried away, and found on my return that the men were still sitting in their wet clothes. Knowing they both had a change, I asked why they had not put on their dry things; but they did not think it necessary, and it was only when I ordered them to do so that they consented. Even then old Kert, though changing everything else, returned with his wet trousers on!

After supper we were visited by a man who introduced himself as the keeper of a general store, Harrison by name, and who invited us to his house—a room at the back of his winkel—where he brought out some very good sherry, and entertained us with the news of the place. Business, he said, was very unsettled, and would be until General Warren had made terms in Bechuanaland.

On my inquiring who the old woman was in the dilapidated hut opposite, Mr. Harrison said she was no less a personage than the widow of the late Cornelius Kok, the Griqua chief.

"She is eighty-nine years of age, and the Government allow her daily rations, which it is my duty to dole out to her."

"Does she object to visitors?" I asked. "If not, I should like to call upon her, and present her with a few partridges shot in her former domains."

"By all means. I will prepare her for your visit."

So next morning I presented myself at the hut, and, after paying the feeble old body due homage, offered her a few birds, besides a little coffee and sugar. She accepted my gift very majestically, and then asked where the cup was to make the coffee, and drink it out of. Not being acquainted with her domestic

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arrangements, and never having seen as much as the inside of her kitchen, I could not answer the question; so hastened to bow myself out of her presence.

Just then Mr. Bartlett came and asked if I would like to buy any musk-melons (*sponspeck*), figs, pomegranates, or mealies, and offered to send his son to show me over his garden, where I might get a shot at some doves and partridges as they came to drink at the spring. The garden was surrounded by fig-trees and pomegranates, the latter in the perfection of beauty as the morning sun kissed their scarlet cheeks. Near the centre was the grave of Mr. Bartlett, senior, and wife, beneath the shadow of a giant fig-tree, which was laden with fruit, both green and ripe, and whose trunk was so large that I could only just reach round it with both arms. A few mealies and squashes (which they call "pampoons") completed the stock of a garden which, with a little most ordinary care, might be made a perfect paradise; but the extreme economy of labour prevented any attempt to assist Nature. Seeing some tall reeds growing in a cluster—which I took at first for sorghum—I asked what they were.

"Oh, that is the eye of the *fontein*, the place where the water from the spring bursts out! Come this way and I will show you. But be careful of snakes, for there are often some of the *boom slange* here, and they are very poisonous."

Pushing aside the reeds, the water could be seen bubbling up as clear as crystal from a hole fully six inches in circumference.

"Why don't you clear these weeds out and get your drinking-water here? It would be pure, and free from all vegetable matter."

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"Oh, we get it over yonder, where it has always been taken from, and where it is some yards nearer the house!"

Surely, I thought, this is not laziness. These people must have been born tired; or is it something in the air?

At the last moment, when we came to inspan, four of the mules and the horse could not be found; they had wandered off unobserved, and were not recovered for nearly three hours. When at last we were off, the route lay along the edge of a *vley* or marsh, and we had to make a long *détour* to avoid the low ground on the one hand and the steep places on the other. Eighteen miles of a winding road brought us to Virtue's Farm. While we were outspanning, I saw a large *pauw* out in the open, and taking my small improved Winchester rifle (a Whitney Kennedy), crept up behind a bush and fired. The sight was set for 250 yards, and I could see by the sand flying up beyond him that my elevation was too high. Lowering the sight to 200 yards I fired again, and again missed; but still the bird never moved. Once more lowering to 150 yards, I was taking aim, when he rose, and I let fly after him; but all he did was to turn his head, as if to make sure that I was really trying to hit him.

On my return to the waggon the fire was alight and the water already boiling, so I tried my hand at coffee-making with some of Smidt's coffee. The difficulty was to precipitate the "grounds" without egg or isinglass. A burning stick was said to be a good thing, but this was tried without success. No better result attended the addition of a dash of cold water; so, as a last resort, I strained it through a linen pocket-hand-

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kerchief, and had the satisfaction of finding that the result—attributable, of course, solely to the patent-strainer—was a beverage as good as the best French coffee I ever drank. Then, after looking round to see that the horse and mules were properly fastened up, to avoid a repetition of the morning's delay, I turned into bed—if lying down with all your clothes on, some cushions under you, and a blanket over you can be so called—and slept with an easy conscience.

Next morning was Sunday, but I did not know it till reminded by an old farmer—an Englishman—who came out of a house close by. I gave him a nip of "Cango," over which he smacked his lips, and then he informed me that he was the owner of the ground we were on and 40,000 acres besides, on which roamed some 300 cattle, 200 horses, and 12,000 or 15,000 sheep, all the property of himself and his sons. After that it did not need the further information that his name was Virtue. "Virtue's Farm" was one of the landmarks of the country.

I asked what price he got for his stock, and where the market was; to which he replied that the market was on the farm. Speculators came along and bought what they wanted, giving generally from 6*l.* to 9*l.* for an ox, 1*l.* to 30*s.* for a sheep, and from 10*l.* to 25*l.* for a horse.

"Surely, with these prices, a man might make a fortune in a very short time? The capital invested is not large, and the labour of a few Hottentot or Griqua Bushmen, as herdsmen, does not cost much."

"That's true. We give a Kaffir herdsman a sheep or a buck per month for wages, and board him, when he is content to eat the offal of the animals killed. But

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the droughts are terrible drawbacks. True, I have a supply of water all the year round, and even when the dam runs dry I still have water in my well; but then we have sickness among the flocks and herds to contend with. First, the *lung ziekt*, or lung-sickness, and then the *steuve ziekt*, or stiff-sickness—the latter a very curious plague, which appeared only a few years ago. The cattle get stiff in their forequarters, till after a few days they cannot walk, and gradually dwindle away and starve to death."

"Is there no cure for it?"

"I never heard of any. The Government sent a veterinary surgeon here to inquire into it; but all he did was to cut up a beast or two and then go away, without doctoring any, and charged as much as if he had cured them all. What was the use of the Government sending a doctor if he didn't find out a cure?"

"Are your horses subject to any disease?"

"Yes, but not so bad as in the Transvaal. They cannot live there at this time of year, and most of their horses are sent down here till May. There are two horse diseases: one called the *paarde ziekt* (horse sickness), and the other the *niewe ziekt* (new sickness). In the first the symptoms are a slight running at the nose, and hard breathing, and frequently the horses die in a few minutes after being attacked. In the other the nose symptoms are the same, accompanied by a swelling under the throat, and sometimes by hard lumps all over the body, which suppurate. If the horse does not die it is rendered unfit for use for some time after. A horse that has had the disease, and has recovered, will often sell for as much as 80*l.* or 100*l.*; for it is supposed that he will not be attacked

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a second time. Even if he is, however, he will not die, and he is then called a 'salted' horse."

"The first disease seems to be the result of inflammation of the lungs, for it appears to attack the horses only in the wet weather. Did you never attempt to doctor one, or try to find out the effect of keeping them in a stable?"

"Oh, they generally cure themselves, or else die! It would never pay to keep them in a stable; with mealies at 3*l.* per muid (200 lbs.), they would eat their heads off in a week. They live on the veldt in all weathers: when one is wanted he is caught, and when he is done with he is turned loose again. Their keep costs nothing."

While we were thus conversing the men had inspanned, and Mr. Virtue rode with us as far as his house, where he introduced us to Mr. Newman, the sheriff, who had a district half as big as England to ride over, serving writs, and otherwise aiding in the administration of the law; a genial, jovial fellow, in whose presence even parchments would lose half their stiffness, sealing-wax would melt, and red tape relax its strangulating coils. His horse had gone lame, so he readily accepted my offer to give him a lift as far as Griqua Town; nor was he proof against a tot of Cango, and another after that, as a—shall I say, stirrup-cup?

On the way down we spied a large bird—called a "koran"—sitting on an ant-hill, and I suggested that if it was not against the law to shoot on Sunday I might try and add him to the larder.

"Shoot away!" said Mr. Newman, "never mind the Sabbath. A traveller has the right to shoot any

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game he sees on the road for his own use. But I'm afraid you can't put the koran to much use."

The mules stopped, and I fired, cutting the grass close to his back. He crept a little more into the open, and bang went the Martini again. At the same moment old Kert cried out, "Die vogel is dooed;" and Newman ran over and picked the bird up. His neck was cut completely through, as if by a knife. It was, of course, quite a fluke. I might have tried a dozen times to hit the bird in that particular spot, and have missed it—perhaps missed the bird altogether—at every shot; but the peculiarity of the wound sufficed to establish my reputation as a marksman, and when we got to Griqua Town the story was repeated from mouth to mouth. We measured the distance; it was just 100 yards, and after that Mr. Newman and I went on and practised judging distances, pacing them out afterwards, to verify our estimates. I found I was always—sometimes a good deal—over the mark, especially at long distances; but after a little practice I managed to keep fairly within the truth. I afterwards found this little lesson of great service; for, after all, to get the range is the most important thing in hunting. You may hold a gun as straight as a die, but if your elevation is wrong you may as well fire at the sun outright.

Mounting a slight rise, we saw some moving objects about a mile ahead, which at first I took for natives, but which the glass revealed as spring-bok.

"You will be sure to get a shot at them," said Newman; "they will let the waggon get quite close." So Lulu and I each got a rifle ready, and waited till near the crest of the next ridge, when the mules were

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ordered to halt. But they seemed to prefer going on to standing still, and went on too far. The bok saw us, and made a start. Jumping out of the waggon we ran on to the veldt to head them off. It was some time before we managed to get sight of them again, when suddenly I spotted them about what seemed to me 400 yards off. Setting my sight for that distance I fired, and had the satisfaction of seeing the sand fly up far away over their backs. Over-estimated the distance again! It was so curious that, in an atmosphere through which every object was seen so clearly that it seemed to be much nearer than it really was, I should always make this fatal mistake of thinking my game was farther off than it actually was: the opposite mistake seemed so much the more likely. But I didn't stop to moralize; I thought all this in a second, and in the same second I had fired another shot at them as they ran. This time the bullet struck the ground just in front of one of them, and he jumped and sprang at least ten feet perpendicularly into the air. These animals are well named spring-bok. Had I not seen my bullet make the sand fly I should have felt certain he was hit; but he ran with the rest some two or three hundred yards, and then they all paused again. We both fired together; once more my bullet struck just underneath one of them, and once more the bok jumped up into the air like a bird; but at the same time one of his companions tumbled over on to his knees. Lulu had drawn first blood. This time they ran away like the wind, the wounded one trying to keep up, but falling behind at every stride. We marked him down beside a bush, and then, with a war-whoop, Kert was off after him as fast as he could go—which, to us at least,

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did not seem very quick. He plodded on, however, and at last reached the spot where the animal fell; still he went on, till he was lost to sight behind the bushes. The buck had got away after all. Taking out my glasses I saw the old felt hat, with its feathers bobbing up and down behind some rocks, and then Kert's figure standing on one of the stones with his hat waving triumphantly in the air.

"Hurrah! He has found him!" and then there was a race to see who would get there first. Two thousand yards up-hill, over stones, and through bushes, with the thermometer at 125° in the sun was no joke; but we stuck to it, and Newman and I arrived close together, quite blown; Lulu, who had to go slowly, being short-sighted, bringing up the rear. Kert had already begun to disrobe the animal—a nice young buck—with the neatness and despatch of a professional butcher, and we soon had him drawn and quartered. Each shouldering a quarter, we made tracks for the waggon, and having deposited our burdens, were not sorry to ride the remaining three or four miles into Griqua Town.

Here Mr. Newman invited us to dinner. Lulu, having to oversee the unpacking, was obliged to decline; but I was glad to accept his hospitality, and leaving the waggon to outspan in front of the court-house and gaol, and behind Waterboer's former palace, we carried between us a quarter of the buck round to his house. We were both hungry; and the quickest thing to cook was "ham and eggs." This was quite a delicacy, as no hogs are raised in the country, and pork is 2*s*. per lb., while eggs are scarcely to be had; so that this homely dish, cooked to perfection, and

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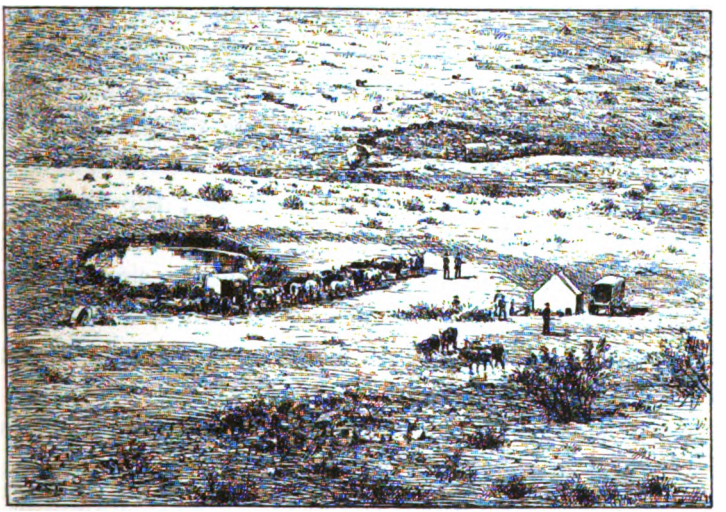
served with the best of all sauces, acquired a flavour it had never possessed before.

After dinner Mr. Newman proposed that we should call upon Mr. Christie, the Resident Commissioner, and practically the monarch of this vast district. I suggested, that as it was Sunday perhaps he would not like a stranger to call.

"Like it! Sunday! He will be no less pleased



A BOER'S HOMESTEAD.

to see you on Sunday than on Monday." So we went round to his house. Unfortunately he was out; but I had the satisfaction of seeing the first house in Griqualand that was worthy of the name.

The ordinary style of dwelling in this country is a one-storey building, with walls of mud plastered with cow-dung, and floors of the same, placed in the centre or by the side of a square enclosure, or kraal, fenced

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in with a wall of sun-dried bricks, of mud, or clay, or cow-dung, or lumps of stone, which serves as a fold for the horse—if one is kept—and for the calves and lambs at night. Not a blade of grass, not a shrub is to be seen for miles round, the country being completely trodden down by the daily coming and going of the flocks of sheep and cattle, as they are driven out to graze and brought home to water; for nobody thinks of building a house save in the few places where water can be had; and a dam, well, or water-hole of some sort, is always to be found close by the South African farmer's "residence," forming a more or less valuable source of revenue, according as it lies on or off the traders' track. The interior of a Dutch Boer's house is usually as devoid of refinement as the outside; the degree of cleanliness, or of dirtiness, varying according to the nature of the housewife. The domestic servants are Kafirs, the herdsmen usually Bushmen and Griquas; their pay being a sheep or a goat per month, besides their food.

Even Mr. Virtue's house—the residence of perhaps the largest landed proprietor in the country—consisted of one or two rooms, with floors of mud or cow-dung, and with bare walls of dried mud, as plain and destitute of "finish" or decoration internally as externally; situated in a square, called by courtesy a garden, fenced in with bunches of wait-a-bit thorn stuck into the ground, but as innocent of any attempt at orderly arrangement, or at floral decoration, as the house. I may have been prejudiced, but my house on wheels had a look of far greater comfort than the permanent residences of any of these—in some cases wealthy—proprietors. With the guns in their green baize covers

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hanging at the side, the cartridge belts, full of polished shells, suspended between them; with the bright-coloured blankets folded neatly on the seats; with such signs of civilization as a looking-glass near the front, and an alarm-clock hung near the lamp at the back,—with these and other small marks of attention on the part of the inmates, our waggon would put to the blush the dwelling-house of any farmer in Griqualand.

Mr. Christie's brick house, however, was by contrast quite a palace. It, as well as the court-house, had recently been built by imprisoned I.D.B.'s. The vices of Kimberley have their compensations after all!

In front was a large pond, fed from a spring about a quarter of a mile away.

Later in the evening I was fortunate enough to find Mr. Christie at home, and I presented my credentials from Col. Schermbrücker. The Commissioner received me very courteously, and entertained me with anecdotes of his travels in South Africa—almost every part of which he seemed to have visited—and with hints for my future guidance. He advised me to take the N.E. side of the Kalahari, as the lower and parts of the lower-central districts were pretty well hunted out by the Bastards and the Bushmen; besides which Bob Duncan, with 300 Bushmen, had ridden through the country some six or eight years ago, driving all the game to the north that they did not kill; so that where at one time there were vast herds there was now only an occasional head. That, at least, was the case when he was there, two years ago; but it was possible that, if there had been frequent rains, the animals might have returned, especially as the three years' war

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between the Damaras and Namaquas had put an end to their hunting. For this reason, ostriches at any rate would be plentiful, as they were practically independent of water, and would return to their old haunts as soon as the hunting ceased.

Mr. Christie, who had spent some time in Namaqualand and Damaraland as private secretary to Palgrave on a government expedition, confirmed what had been told me by others, that there was a tract of country in Great Namaqualand where it never rained, and which was inhabited by Hottentots—a lazy lot of thieves, who in two years had stolen over 90,000 head of cattle from the Herreras, or cattle-raising Damaras. The nearest water to Walwich Bay is about sixty miles inland, and what trade there is is carried on by means of the little Namaqua oxen, which have to travel the distance down to the coast and back again without water, sometimes staying a day or two in order to trade their load of skins, feathers, and ivory, for beads, knives, guns, powder, and other stuff, brought down four times a year by a steamer from Cape Town. It is wonderful how these little cattle can go so long without drinking.

Next day Mr. Newman introduced me to the "lions" of the place. Foremost among them is Waterboer, the ex-king of Griqualand, who in a drunken fit sold his country to the English for a pension of 1000*l.* a year, and has regretted it ever since. The first chief Waterboer was originally a Namaqua, who became a slave of the former Dutch settlers. Running away from his masters, he profited by the knowledge he had acquired among them, and was afterwards elected chief of his former tribe. On his death his son succeeded him, but, having

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a greater love of drink than of liberty, he sold his birthright, and has since lived a life of *otium sine dignitate*, alternating with fits of remorse and a desire to compound for his treachery to his own people by treachery to the English. In the last war with the Namaquas he was inclined to join the insurgents, and would most likely have done so if the authorities had not put him out of the way of temptation by sending him down to Cape Colony. Of course this was magnanimous on the part of the authorities, who would have saved their 1000*l.* a year if the king had turned traitor; but 1000*l.* a year was cheaper than a war, and no doubt old Waterboer's influence, had he joined the rebels, would have prolonged hostilities. The old man lives in a round military tent, at the lower end of the town, near the ruins of the first church that was built here, surrounded by his sons and daughters and nephews and nieces. When I was ushered into his august presence, he was seated on a wooden bench, placed at the foot of a bedstead of deal boards roughly put together, and covered with spring-bok skins and bright-coloured blankets. The ground also was strewn with skins for carpets. Mr. Newman introduced me, and told him I had come from America, and was anxious to take the portrait of the former chief of Griqualand.

Taking his pipe out of his mouth—which he did not seem to have breath enough left to "pull"—he answered in a kind of half-whisper, "Ek es ziek in mij borse" ("I am sick in my chest"), and then looked to his son to continue the conversation. The latter—a sickly, yellow, effeminate-looking man, who had the appearance of having tried to carry too heavy

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a load of Cango, under which his legs had given way, when he had tried to walk on his face among the stones—explained, in a mixture of broken Dutch and English, that his father had not slept all night, and could not come out of his tent. He seemed to understand what was meant by taking his photograph, for he urged that it would be too hot for his father to come out into the sun. I explained that this was not necessary; all that need be done would be to open the tent and group his family around him as he sat on his bench, and then it would be over in a minute. He was evidently suspicious, and turning to one of his people, said something in the Griqua language, which Kert, who was with us, afterwards interpreted as: "They wish to laugh at us and make fools of us by taking our portraits, to show how poor we are;" but at last he assented to this arrangement, but said that it must be to-morrow. So we took our departure, and called upon another notability, in the person of John Hendrik Michael Fartein, the oldest living settler in Griqualand, who looked quite patriarchal as he sat up in his bed, with a covering of skins on his legs, his snowy, crinkly hair hanging over his broad forehead, and looking all the whiter by contrast with his wrinkled, leathery face.

Born with the century, he was given by his father, when five years old, to Janssen, the missionary, who, in company with Anderson and Kramer, had come to this part of the country from Rielfontein, at the end of the last century, in search of water, and who, finding a spring here, had founded Griqua Town in 1802. Having been taught by the missionaries to read and write, Fartein became a teacher and preacher, under

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the auspices of the Missionary Society, of his connection with which he spoke very proudly. He remembered Janssen being married here and his death, about twenty-five years later; the successive departures of Anderson and Kramer for Europe; Helm, who succeeded them; and Moffat, who came soon afterwards and worked for two years with Helm before going to Kuruman; and, finally, Helm's departure and Wright's appointment.

"But we have no missionary here now at all," he sorrowfully added. "I am too old to preach or teach, and there is no one to look after the people, though a minister is needed more than ever. Now we have a large town, with many people, and shops, hotels, courts, and gaols; but no one at the mission-house. I have tried to induce the people to pay for a minister's services, but they decline to do so, saying they cannot afford it, and that they can do well enough without one!"

I could quite believe the venerable missionary when he said the people needed instruction more than ever. The black man is not improved by a veneer of civilization. The real "savage," who has never been in contact with the whites, has a certain amount of honour and chivalry about him, and one cannot help admiring him; but the half-Christianized black is a lying, lazy scoundrel, without a spark of self-respect, and commanding no admiration on the part of others. From this sweeping statement I must except some of the Bastards, especially those who in America would be called octoroons.

Turning from things spiritual to things temporal, Mr. Fartein gave me some interesting information

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about the rainfall. He said that heavy rains fell for many years after the time when the missionaries first came and found water here; and that there used to be a river from here to the Orange River, and quite a large lake in the flat near the town. But after a time the rainfall became less and less, so that the lake began to dry up, causing a great deal of fever, from which half the population of the town died. Then a terrible drought ensued, lasting from 1835 to 1840, and during those five years not a drop of rain fell, the springs ceased, and the people had to dig down many feet to obtain water. To this succeeded a period of partial rains, a small quantity of rain falling in the summer months, between January and March; but in 1873 another drought occurred, the springs dried up again, and once more the people had recourse to wells.

"But have you not had rain recently?" I inquired.

"Well, yes; we had a little rain a year ago, and some the year before that; but compared with the quantity of water that used to fall fifty years ago and more, when a big river ran from here to the Orange, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that we have had perpetual drought ever since."

During my interview with Mr. Fartein, Lulu took a photo of the old mission-house in which Moffat had lived, as well as of the former residence of Waterboer.

Next morning we kept our appointment with the ex-chief himself, and, after some persuasion, he agreed to let us group his family round the tent, with the

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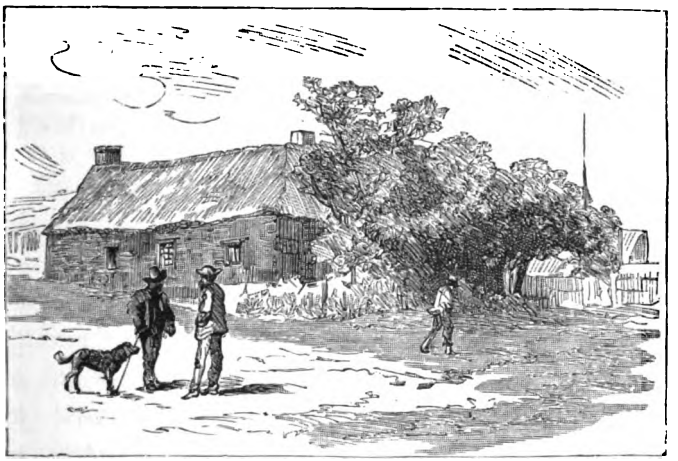
ruins of the church for a background. Three of his sons and one nephew came out, but as only the latter was accompanied by his wife and children, we sent the others back for their better halves. As they were a long time returning Lulu suggested that the ladies were probably arranging their toilets; but, after waiting some twenty minutes, Mr. Newman offered to go and hurry them up, and found that the old man



OLD MISSION HOUSE, GRIQUA TOWN.

had forbidden them to put in an appearance. As the ex-chief still sulked like Achilles in his tent, I went forward and lifted the side so as to let a little light in, but it was too dark to get a portrait. It would not do, however, after all this fuss, to let him think he had disappointed us, so, carefully arranging his camera, Lulu attracted his attention with "Kijk je dar," and made believe it was done. A shadow of displeasure passed over his face as I thanked him, but he did not

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reply, and it afterwards appeared that he was in that state of "drunk" known to the police as "incapable," and in other quarters as "stupid." *Quantum mutatus ab illo*, one could not help thinking, when comparing him with his predecessor.

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CHAPTER VI.

Killing two stein-bok at one shot—The "honest Boer" again—Reinforcements—Dining *à la* Bastard—Watering at Abram's Dam—Jan is lost—Stuck fast in the sand—A terrible road—Water at last—A "creamery" at Kheis—How to harness an ox-team—Police duty in Korannaland—On the verge of the Kalahari—Oxen *v.* mules—An ungrateful mule—Kert among his relations.

Mr. Christie having told me that the greater part of the rest of my journey would be sand, and heavy travelling for the mules, I determined, if possible, to reinforce my team with a pair of horses. I soon found a butcher who had a nice chestnut horse for sale; and next day a man who wanted to trade horses came up to my waggon, and asked me if I would take a pretty little chestnut mare in exchange for my grey, which he wanted to match with another just like it. It so happened that the mare was quite a match for the butcher's horse, and so I tried to strike a bargain. The trader assured me she was "salted," and was broken to the gun.

"Try her," said he. So Lulu fired a gun behind the waggon, while we stood talking. She never flinched. "There's a beauty, now; you shall have her in exchange for the grey, and 5*l.* thrown in." But while the trader wanted me to give him 5*l.* in cash, I asked 6*l.* the other way! Neither of us would give way, so

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he went off; but returned in the afternoon, and said he would "split the difference."

"All right," I said. "Give me 10*s.*, and we exchange horses."

"No; you give me 2*l.* 10*s.*, that is half of what I asked."

"Yes," I explained; "but I asked you 6*l.*; the difference between that and 5*l.* is 1*l.*, and half that is 10*s.*: that's what I call splitting the difference."

But he would not see the matter in that light; so I told him he might keep his mare, and I would keep my horse. Presently, however, he came back a second time, and offered to complete the bargain if I would pay him 10*s.*, to which I assented. The mare had the initials "L. A." branded in large letters on her hip, so I christened her "Lady Anna," after a young lady in Berlin for whom I had a sneaking regard; then, buying the butcher's horse for 10*l.*, and a set of harness from Mr. Newman for another 3*l.*, I gave orders to inspan at once, and start for Wittewater, about eighteen miles away.

That night we outspanned near Wittewater, and finding good feed for the horses and mules, hobbled them by tying their knees together and then fastening their heads down short to the strap that held their legs, and left them out to graze during the night. Next day, however, at daylight, only the mare was to be seen; so I saddled her, and started down the road in search, sending the men in various directions. About two miles down I met a Boer, who said a brown horse, hobbled, had passed him about an hour before, so I galloped on, but could see no trace of it. At a farmhouse about six or seven miles from where they started

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I found three of the mules drinking at a dam, and two others were brought along while I was there by a Kaffir boy who was driving oxen. Telling him to take all five mules back to the waggon, I turned about to search for the horse, and presently met Jan, who said he had tracked him into a rocky hill, but had lost his spoor there. Thinking he might have made straight for his old home at Griqua Town, I put Jan on the mare, with a note to Mr. Christie, telling him the facts, and asking him to help the bearer in recovering the wanderer; and walked back towards the waggon. About half-way, while sitting down on the top of one of the innumerable *koppjes*, or gigantic natural stone-heaps, I pulled out my glasses, and saw old Kert and Lulu cooking breakfast—a sight which made me feel more hungry than before—and then, lowering the glasses, swept the sides of a hill to the right of me, where, among the bushes about 150 yards off, I saw something move. It was stein-bok. Six of them were playing about, jumping into the air, and butting each other just like kittens. When I thought they had played long enough I took aim at two that stood side by side. Immediately following the report I distinctly heard a thud, as the bullet struck, and instantly the whole herd was out of sight. I searched the bushes and rocks carefully with my glasses, but could see nothing of them; so, shouldering my rifle, I quickly picked my way down the sharp rocks to where they were. There were drops of blood on the stones, between which their trail was quite distinct—one to the right, the other to the left; the latter marked by quite a stream of blood.

Knowing that an animal bleeding like that could not go far, I took the other spoor, and followed it for

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about 500 yards, keeping a good look-out, thinking I might get another shot. There were marks of blood here, too, increasing as I advanced; so that my bullet must have wounded two bok at one shot. Climbing a high rock I carefully scanned every nook, and had the pleasure of seeing a bok's head about 300 yards farther on. Feeling sure that the animal was wounded, and remembering a hint given me by old Kert, I determined not to disturb it: the longer it was left the more stiff and faint it would become; whereas, if followed up at once, it might get up out of range, and run, perhaps a mile or more, before being exhausted. So, marking the spot where it lay, I retraced my steps, and followed up the other trail, at the end of which lay a dead buck, with a bullet-hole right through his body from shoulder to shoulder. Quickly disembowelling him, I laid him on my shoulders—his legs hanging over on either side of my neck—and carried him to the rock from which I had seen his late playmate, who, however, was not now visible; so I followed up his track, intending to give him the *coup de grâce*, and, in the same spot in which I had marked him down, found him, no longer sitting, but lying stone dead. My bullet had passed through the two!

It was not till next day, at noon, that Jan came back with the horse, and accompanied by a Boer, on whose farm the animal had formerly grazed, but who would not tell where he was till Jan promised to pay him a sovereign. He was one of Froude's honourable, blackmailing, religious, sanctimonious, upright, thieving scoundrels, who would keep the breakfast waiting with his long-winded family prayers, and then go out and "annex" his neighbour's property;

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and I had the satisfaction of giving him—not the sovereign, but—a full and particular account of my opinion of him.

We made another start that afternoon, and passed Wittewater, where there was a spring from which we replenished our water-vessels, having been dependent for the last two days upon a puddle in the road. Pushing on from there towards Cope's Farm, sixteen miles ahead, we were caught in a tremendous downpour of rain, and, camping alongside a sheep kraal, had to go supperless to bed, for it rained so hard that it was impossible to make a fire. The kicking and snorting of the mules, which I had taken good care to see securely tied to the waggon, awoke me about 3 a.m. The storm had passed, and the moon was shining brightly—so brilliantly that I could easily discern a number of goats making an early breakfast off the mules' harness, which had been hastily thrown on the ground. Having driven them away, I was soon asleep again, and awoke soon after daybreak from a happy dream of lands where there was always water.

On starting again we fell in with a Bastard—one of Kert's friends, by name Abraham—who had been to Griqua Town to buy necessaries, but having spent all his substance on a cart and harness, had nothing with him to eat. He asked to be allowed to travel with us as far as Kheis, where he lived, and said if we would buy a sheep and share it with him, he would give us another when he got home; to this we of course assented, and the *skaap* was soon bought, caught, and slaughtered, and thrown into the waggon, and off we started again.

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Our next camping-place was in a valley with several pools of water, on the edge of one of which I saw two large crested cranes, which I twice fired at, and each time missed, having—as usual—over-estimated the distance. Here we dined off our newly acquired sheep; the Bastard and his ragged boy fetching the firewood from some bushes hard by, while Kert skinned and dressed the animal, reserving the offal for the use of his new acquaintances. This they prepared by simply pulling the intestines through their hands, rinsing them in a little muddy water, and then rolling the smaller ones up, putting them inside the larger, and placing them, together with the feet, skin, and all, into the hot ashes.

Presently the boy pulled out the "trotters," one by one, and after removing the skin with a stone replaced them in the ashes. When they were sufficiently cooked, the hoofs were deftly knocked off by a blow from a stone, and then the feast began. Holding one end of the bone in each hand the skin and gristle were gnawed off with the teeth, and, when an unusually tough piece of sinew defied the combined forces of jaws and hands, a knife was passed between the lips and the bone, and the recalcitrant morsel severed from its original abiding-place. Though inelegant, this method of discussing a "joint" is practical; for once between the teeth the mouthful cannot well escape, while the remaining portion is held equally safely in the other hand. I must confess to having often put the system to a practical trial, in the case of a more than usually tough steak, and can recommend it as a safe remedy against an unfortunate "slip betwixt the—knife and the lip."

Our next stage was to Abram's Dam, a sandy

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hole, the lower end of which was filled up by a wall. The only thing lacking was water. Close by, however, was a well, from which some men were drawing water by means of a primitive contrivance, the "bucket" consisting of a conical canvas bag, about six feet long and a foot in diameter at the top, tapering to four inches at the bottom, which was closed by a string. This was lowered into the well, a weight being fixed at the top of the bag to insure its sinking into the water, and then the rope was made fast to a horse, and it was hauled up full. The string at the lower end of the bucket being slackened, the water ran into a stone tank about eight feet square and four feet deep, and thence into a trough at which the horses and cattle drank. A man standing by regulated the number of animals admitted to drink at a time, to prevent blocks. How the eager, panting, thirsty creatures ran for their lives, and, plunging their heads up to their eyes into the cooling liquid, sucked it in as if they could not get it fast enough! We had to wait nearly an hour for our turn, for which the moderate fee of 1*s.* was paid to the owner of the well—a Mr. Solomon—whose facial expression proclaimed his descent even more clearly than his name, and who advised us to camp a short distance away, where there was grass for the mules, to stay until 2 p.m. next day, and then, starting with the animals well fed and watered, travel that evening across the first heavy sands, outspan again for an hour or two on a patch of hard ground, and then continue our journey till we came to the Orange River, at a place called Zechobaar.

Early next morning I was awakened by the screaming of the partridges as they flew overhead, and jumping

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out of bed and dressing myself—i.e. putting on my hat—I shot away for an hour or so, and soon had all hands busily engaged in picking up, and then picking, the birds. It took three hours to clean and salt them; and the rest of the time was occupied in repairing the Bastard's rickety old cart, which had broken down, the bolt that fastened the spring to the box having given way. I happened to have some extra bolts, and managed by dint of hammering, pulling, and swearing to get one fixed that was many sizes bigger than the one that it replaced. The old man was very pleased, saying, "Die Amerikaaner is slim" ("The Americans are knowing").

At two o'clock we started, and shooting partridges all along the road, with an occasional koran, got on the first sand-patch just as it was dark, and outspanned in a drizzling rain. After supper we resumed, and rode on till eleven o'clock, when rain came down in torrents. Kert strongly advised our outspanning, as such a rain would fill the pans; so coming to an abandoned kraal, which would afford us plenty of fuel, we did so. Waking up in the middle of the night, I looked out and found Kert and the rest all fast asleep, —some under the waggon, others under the cart—with the rain coming down in bucketsful, and the fire nearly out. Putting on my rubber coat, I got down and made up the fire, and then woke Jan and asked where the mules were. "Over there," he replied, half-asleep. But "over there" might mean anything; so I aroused old Kert and repeated my inquiry. He jumped up like a shot, and went out into the darkness, while I stayed to keep up the fire, so that he might not lose himself, and in half an hour he returned, like "Little

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Bo-Peep," bringing the mules behind him. I ordered him to make them fast, and look after them; but after breakfast, when we came to inspan, two horses and a mule were missing again. Jan went after them; and as he did not return for an hour, I became anxious, and asked the Bastard to saddle his horse and follow the track. This he did, returning about two hours later with the animals, but without Jan. We waited patiently all that day, and kept a big fire burning all night, but still no Jan. Where could he be? Kert said he would be all right, and we need not trouble ourselves; if he was delayed very long he would know that we should not wait, because if we did not get on at once the pans would be dried up, and we should get no water. Already all trace of the recent heavy rain had vanished, and we should do him no good by waiting, and run great risk ourselves. But I was loth to move on, uncertain of the "boy's" fate; so I got the Bastard to ride out again in search of him, while, with the double object of attracting his attention in case he might have lost his way and be anywhere near, and of replenishing our larder, Lulu and I shot at the partridges for some time, and afterwards went out and mounted some of the higher sand-dunes, with one eye after Jan and the other after stein-bok. In the afternoon the Bastard returned without news of Jan. Old Kert, who was always quarrelling with him, now suggested that the "boy" had run away and would not return. I did not think this; but if we waited any longer we might all run the risk of starvation, so leaving a note for Jan, fastened to a stick stuck in the ground on the site of our camp, telling him to follow us to Kheis, we resumed our journey.

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Kert said that by leaving Zechobaar to the left, we should save two hours of bad road; but if the road that we avoided was worse than that which we followed, it deserved to have a "big, big D" put before the "bad." Our track lay through a stretch of country on which sand-dunes and stone koppjes seemed to have been tossed in the most admired confusion. One pair of the waggon wheels would sink into the sand, while the other pair would be mounted on huge stones; a steep stony rise, not quite perpendicular, would be scaled only to expose to view an equally steep slope of sand on the other side. It was wonderful how the mules pulled up such heavy slopes; in fact, it was marvellous how they found a foothold in such places at all. Jan being absent, the position of Jehu fell to my lot; and never did the responsibilities of that position seem so heavy. If it was bad to go on, it was worse to stop; for I felt sure that if a waggon-wheel got stuck in the sand, or jammed in a crevice in the rocks, we should never extricate it. At last, snap went the singletree under the strain, and we had to pull up. While Kert went to cut a small tree to make a new one, Lulu and I took our guns and went after some of the rock-rabbits—called "dossi," or "klip-haas"—little coney-like creatures which are only to be found in the crevices of cliffs. We could hear them screeching among the rocks, but unfortunately did not manage to hold the shooting-irons straight enough to bring any back to the waggon.

Having made good the damage, we started again, much to the regret of the Bastards, who made the remarkable excuse that we should get to the water too early if we went on too fast! We had not gone far

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before we came to a steep slope of deep sand, in the middle of which the mules gave signs of stopping. I shouted to the men to whip them up, but they were too late, and though the leaders, whose feet were on the hard ground, made a gallant effort, the rest of the team would not respond, and we stuck fast. It was getting too dark to attempt to extricate ourselves; so we outspanned just as we were, Lulu volunteering to watch the mules all night, while the rest of us, who had had a hard day's work, went to sleep. But there was not much sleep for me; I lay awake thinking how we could most easily get the waggon out. Suddenly it struck me that we might pave the stretch of sand with the flat stones that lay about in hundreds. No sooner thought of than done. Getting up at once, I started clearing away the sand in front of the wheels, and then laid a double track of paving-stones in front, right away to the hard ground, a distance of about twenty feet. Twenty feet only between getting stuck in the sand and safety! Then screwing up the waggon with the jack, I got a slab of stone under each wheel, and "turned in." It was now nearly daylight, and I had hardly lain down when Lulu came along with the horses. Hastily inspanning them, we tried to make them pull, but they would not try. One of them pulled backwards better than forwards, so we had to unharness them and leave their "poor relations," the mules, to do the work unaided.

A mile farther on we got stuck fast again, on a steep sand-hill, from whose summit we could see a high mountain slope, over which the road ran—if road it could be called—at the bottom of a watercourse whose bed was strewn with stones of all shapes and

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sizes; some huge square blocks, as sharp as if just freshly cut from a quarry, with flat table tops; others with their upper faces at all angles; some with jagged, saw-like edges; others, again, rounded by the action of water and weather. The prospect was not inviting. Here we were stuck in a sand-bank: what should we do when we came to traverse such an impracticable path as that?

"What shall we do?" I said to Kert, just to see what he would say.

"I don't know, what Boss will," he replied. "You have brought mules, when I said oxen are the best for this land."

He was right, oxen would have done better. "Well, Kert, you had better take my horse and ride into Kheis, and hire twelve oxen; meantime I will unload the waggon and see what I can do."

The old Bushman was not sorry to have his superior knowledge thus admitted, and soon rode off, while all hands set to work to unload the waggon. This done, the mules were hitched to again, and pulled it out of the sand, and then the ascent of the Devil's Kloof began. I could hardly stand, as the wheels jumped and bumped and thumped from rock to boulder, from boulder to rock, and then ran crash into a heap of little stones. The pull nearly knocked the animals off their feet, but they stuck to it gamely, holding on by their toe-nails. Bang, jump, jolt, bump, we are half-way up. Will they hold on, will the waggon hold together till we reach the top? And what awaits us there? Down went the forewheel into a hole. "Over we go," I thought, and looked for a smooth place to jump on; but we struck another rock and

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partly righted. It was like a ship tossed about on a petrified sea. Three parts of the way safely accomplished! but now came a very steep bit. The mules were right in front of us and above us, hanging on like flies. It seemed a miracle that the waggon did not pull them down instead of their pulling the waggon up. No horses could have done it. They seemed to understand their own danger, and to know that to pause would be fatal, and at last they reached the top in safety, and nothing smashed. After that I was satisfied the waggon would stand anything. But how about the Bastard's old rickety cart? Would it not break down of its own weight, without a load of goods? However, I must try it, so putting in a light load, I brought the mules back, and for the second time accomplished the passage in safety. Four times the cart returned for a fresh load, and four times more completed the steep ascent. But before we could get the things packed a heavy thunderstorm came on, and we had to hurriedly cover them up with pieces of canvas, rubber rugs, and so on. Dead-beat I crept under the waggon, leaving the mules to browse on the ragged rocks. I would not move for all the rain in a South African sky. It soon ceased, however, and then we finished loading, collected enough water from the hollows in the rocks to fill the small water-barrel—all we had had since leaving camp, and the first clear water for days,—spanned the mules in, and started downhill. Old Virgil had never been in Griqualand, or he would never have expressed such a decided opinion about *Facilis descensus Averni.* The slope to Avernus might have been well graded, but the best *carrus*, *rhedarius*, or *carruca* in ancient Rome,

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loaded with heavy *impedimenta*, would have come to grief going over such a road as we had. It was not riding, it was simply bouncing down. We leapt from one rock to another, in a series of heavy bumps, the loose rocks sometimes giving way under us, and threatening to follow us and overwhelm us. Twice the wheelers went down as the pole was thrown from one side to the other, one forewheel striking a rock before the other; but by pulling with all my might on the reins I managed to save their knees.

As we reached the bottom, Lulu drew a sigh of relief, exclaiming, "Who would stay at home in a comfortable house when there is such pleasure in store here? Of all the wretched, miserable, desolate, sandy, rocky, dried-up patches on the face of this planet, I think this is the best. If I could control an earthquake for five minutes, there would be a sea here, and I would sail quietly home to my wife and child."

I could not contradict him, so I held my peace, answering only with a smile; and the next minute he was whistling a snatch from "Patience."

To the rocks succeeded a long stretch of deep orange-coloured sand, through which the waggon laboured heavily, but save for the groaning and squeaking of the grinding wheels all was still as death. Pausing now and then to give the panting mules five or ten minutes' breathing-time, we almost lost sight of the old Bastard, who was leading the way with his shandrydan, obscured in the dark shadow of a distant mountain, behind which the sun had hidden. With the approach of darkness I began to wonder what had become of poor Jan. Had he gone back to Abram's Dam, finding no water elsewhere? or had

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he made a short cut to the Orange River, hoping to intercept us there? or had he returned to the camping-place, and finding it deserted, without food or drink or shelter, followed us over this inhospitable wilderness? Lulu adopted Kert's theory, and reasoned that, being a native, he would make straight for the river, knowing that we must have done so ourselves. Just then we came up to the old Bastard's cart, which had stopped for us, and heard him call out, "*Hier uitspan*" ("Here outspan").

"Is there water here?" I asked; "I see none."

"The river is close by; we cannot get any nearer. Listen!"

We paused to listen, and our ears were refreshed by the delightful music of running water. "Yes," I said, "I hear it too, it cannot be far!"

"No; only about half an hour!"

Only half an hour! it sounded not ten minutes off! However, it was of no use discussing the point, so the mules were soon outspanned, and the Bastard undertook to drive them to water while we cooked the supper.

They returned in about an hour, when everything was ready, the supper cooked, and a bright lantern hung out in the heavens for our benefit. The Bastard advised me to hobble the horses and mules in the same way as he did his, saying they would not go far out of sight; but I was sceptical, and preferred to make them fast to the waggon; then firing a gun twice to attract Kert's attention, in case he should be passing with the oxen, thinking we were still stuck in Devil's Kloof, we poured out an oblation to the god of sleep.

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Next morning, early, I got up to let my horses and mules loose, and found them all where I had left them, but the old Bastard's were not to be seen. He soon took up their spoor, however, and went after them, but did not return till nearly noon, having found them seven miles away. By that time my beasts had had their fill of grass and leaves from the bush, and were well rested into the bargain. Just as we were on the point of inspanning, Kert rode up on "Lady Anna." He was quite amazed to find us there, having taken the upper road in a direct line for the kloof; but seeing a waggon in the distance, he rode across with true Bushman's instinct, to see who it was, leaving the oxen to take care of themselves. "However," said he, "they may as well pull the waggon, we shall have to pay for them, and save the mules," and so he rode off, and in another hour we were off to Kheis, the mules being put to the Bastard's cart, and Kert and the boy bringing up the rear with the horses.

The ox-yokes used in South Africa are straight pieces of wood laid on the shoulders of the oxen, just in front of a natural hump which seems to have been made on purpose to prevent the yoke from slipping off. At each end of the yoke is fixed a piece of flat wood, reaching a little more than half-way down the neck, the ends of which are fastened by a strip of raw hide, which passes round the neck, and threatens to choke the patient beasts when pulling a heavy load. It is quite the common thing to see a team of from twelve to twenty or twenty-four oxen yoked together in this cumbrous fashion, their large projecting horns getting in each other's way, and looking like a *chevaux de frise* blocking the road.

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Sometimes these useless ornaments measure as much as twelve feet across, and the animals have to learn to pass their horns under each other's necks to keep them out of the way.

Pulling up at the barracks, I presented my letter from Mr. Christie to the head of police, Mr. Davis, who gave me permission to outspan in the enclosure, and then invited me into a little round hut of mud-plastered sticks, where we had tea. He apologized for the absence of milk, but laughingly offered me as a substitute a jug of "cream," consisting of pure, undiluted river-water. "We all drink cream here when we can get no milk—horses, cattle, and all; and that's what your mules are after"—the poor thirsty brutes were hurrying across the barren kraal as fast as their legs could carry them;—"the river runs close to those huts."

"Talking about water," I interrupted, "is there any pasture about here? My horses and mules have been grazing on stones for the last three days!"

"The nearest is on the veldt, six miles away, past yonder beacon;" and he pointed to a high heap of stones some three or four miles off. "That beacon marks the boundary between British territory and the Kalahari, or Korannaland. You will find a little karroo-bush on the border, but nothing but sand till you get there. Just beyond this beacon you will find a collection of huts, belonging to a lot of Bushmen, who have had to be put over the border because their ideas of *meum* and *tuum* did not correspond with ours. The southern part of the Kalahari is supposed to be partially within our jurisdiction, but it is only inhabited by a few Bastard cattle- and sheep-farmers, who are

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permitted to manage their own affairs so long as their regulations don't conflict with colonial views. But that's pretty often. I have only just got back to-day from a long ride after a thieving Bushman. I had his trail all night, but lost it at daybreak among the stones."

Inviting Mr. Davis to come over and have "strawberries" with us, we drove across in the direction indicated, and about an hour before sundown we outspanned in Korannaland, on the verge of the Kalahari. The whole way was through deep red sand, which lay about in waves, each higher than the other, with now and then some white limestone cropping out, which heightened the resemblance which the country bore to a sea—a veritable Red Sea—whose waves here and there were tossed by the wind into white foam. Through this, however, the cattle walked, like the Israelites of old through another Red Sea, as on dry land. The contrast between the manner in which they took it and the floundering of the horses and mules was so striking that I determined either to hire oxen or to trade the mules for oxen at the first opportunity.

Helping to outspan, I noticed that one of the mules was very much cut on the fetlock, either through the chafing of the halter or by a stumble on the hard road on the Devil's Kloof. Thinking it would heal better if a little grease were applied, I held up his foot to doctor him, when he showed his appreciation of my kindness by patting me on the head with his hind-hoof, evidently forgetting that he had not taken his shoes off, and that they were of iron. It was certainly very thoughtless of the beast, as I had been very kind to

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him, and had often prevented Jan from slogging him with his fish-pole; and this was my reward. I have always heard that familiarity breeds contempt; but I must say I had more respect for the mule's hoof, if less respect for the mule, than I had before. The

OLD KERT, MY GUIDE.

distance which suddenly intervened between us, however, prevented me from giving him any evidence of the change in my feelings; and in the meantime Lulu and Kert ran to pick me up, and began to feel my bumps. My head still had hair on it, and was not much injured, but the knuckle of my right forefinger

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was bald, and the second finger nearly *minus* a nail. Kert consoled me by saying I must not expect anything better from a mule, as he is neither a man nor a horse; and I certainly came to the conclusion that kindness was wasted on the hybrid.

We were soon surrounded by some fifteen or twenty Bushmen and women—such a tagrag and bobtail lot! one woman, more "dressed" than the rest, wearing an old gown, in which holes predominated; the rest naked, save for a piece of sheepskin or an old rag fastened round their waists, over which their long bosoms hung like leather bags, reaching almost to their thighs; the men presenting a more respectable appearance, having fewer rags to hide their nakedness, but what they had being, if possible, dirtier still.

It was here that Kert had hired the oxen, from the father-in-law of the Bastard whom we had picked up on the road; and hand-shaking, accompanied by innumerable "clicks," went on for some minutes. Old Kert had arrayed himself in an old admiral's uniform, to make himself look grand, and was quite the "swell." Suddenly the crowd dispersed, as if by magic.

"Zien je," said Kert proudly; "ek es groot man hier. Det es mej men. Oons sal krije houdt und water." ("See, I am a great man here. These are my people. We shall soon have wood and water.") And then he went off to pay for the oxen, and see if we could hire again as far as Wilkerhout's Drift. In half an hour the people returned—though the river was a mile away—laden, some with wood, some with water, put down their loads without speaking, and walked away.

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CHAPTER VII.

A Bastard's family—A Bushman's tent—Jan returns half dead—The story of his adventure—Botanizing in the desert—The sama, or wild water-melon—Bushman's rice—A *bonne-bouche*—Collecting insects—Stuck in a sand-hill—A dream of Golconda—Searching for diamonds—Shooting pheasants and wild geese—Latest Paris fashions—Nature's dress-improver—A Mantalini of the desert—A primitive pumping-engine—A parti-coloured family.

KERT was away so long that I went to see what he was about, in company with an Irishman who had a trading-waggon outspanned close by, and who was about to return to the drift, where he lived. He said he had hired oxen for sixpence a day each—the regular tariff—so I proposed to him to go together and to pay half his hire if he would pull us out in case I got stuck in the sand. To this he readily assented, so I hurried on to find Kert before he had struck a bargain, and found him at the tent of a trader named Roolf, who was sitting beside a smouldering fire in front of his *werf* (i.e. residence) smoking his pipe in company with two sickly yellow-faced sons, each fondling a huge dog—a cross between a bulldog and a greyhound,—while his wife, an obese old lady, was cutting up a sheep and putting the pieces into a pot, and the two daughters, with babies slung at their backs, were carrying water, feeding the fire, &c. Close by were more girls milking the cows—the hind-legs of the animals being strapped together to prevent them kicking over the pails.

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The first question asked was about the war, and what the English would do. So far, everybody who had evinced any interest in the dispute between Boers and English had shown a partiality for the former; but these people preferred the English; the Boers' tyrannical treatment of them and their like had made them, with good cause, as strong haters of the Boers as the Boers, with less reason, were haters of the English. They did not display their affection for the English—for to them I was an Englishman, not being a Boer—by any lavish hospitality; and when I ventured to ask for a little milk, they said they had none, in spite of the milkmaids only a few yards off; but when I offered to pay for it their memories brightened up a little, and they thought they could spare us a little "if they had it," and then found some "left from the morning." While they boiled it I got them to give me some particulars about their mode of life. They had, it appeared, some 5000 sheep, 800 cattle, and 1000 goats, with which they wandered over the country, with nothing but a tent to shelter them, with a few skins and a blanket or two for beds. For the last seven years they had been "trekking" from Carnarvon, employing Kaffirs and Bushmen as herdsmen, who took their flocks and herds miles away on the veldt, and returned every other day—or, if water was very distant, every four days—to the family tent. They lived entirely on meat, drinking the rain-water just as they found it, with a little occasional coffee for a treat, which they drank, dregs and all, without sugar. They were thankful to get sixpence for about three pints of milk, and I took my leave.

It was quite dark, the sky clouded and the moon

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not yet up, and on returning to the waggon we missed our way, being attracted by the fire outside a Bushman's tent—a primitive structure consisting of a few sticks stuck in the ground with a few weeds piled on them here and there, affording plenty of ventilation, but very little shelter—none certainly from the rain and still less from wild beasts; while, as for the sun, these Bushmen do not like to be shaded from that, but sit outside all day basking in the hot rays.

Another minute's walk, however, brought us to our "*werf*" (if the Bushman's tent deserved the style and title of "residence," surely our waggon did), where I found that Mr. Davis had ridden over, and was sitting with Lulu and the men over the fire; but not a horse or a mule was to be seen. After all our recent experience and the warnings the men had had, this was too much for me. My temper was up. I let fly at the Bushman with my most refined Afrikander-Dutch, and introduced my bootmaker to the boy's—well, he never had a tailor; while I christened Kert with several new pet names he had never owned before, and threatened him with kind treatment. They flew away after the animals, and, guided by the sound of their feet among the stones, soon found them, and tied them up for the night.

As soon as my bluster was over, Mr. Davis gave me the good news that a Kaffir had been to his place with the report that a man answering to Jan's description had come along the road with him, inquiring for our waggon. He was half-dead, he said, and had stopped at Peter Smidt's house to get something to eat. I immediately sent Kert off with a horse to bring him to the waggon. Poor "boy," he must have had a hard time

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of it; when he arrived in about two hours and a half he could hardly get off his horse, so weak and stiff was he. We were all anxious to hear his story, but I would not let him speak till he had had some brandy and water and a little boiled cracked-wheat, the "lightest" thing I had for his famished stomach.

This revived him, and he soon began to talk, prefacing his story by a very repentant expression of regret at his neglect of the horses, which had caused all this trouble.

"If you will forgive me this time, I will watch day and night; I have been punished enough by nearly dying of starvation out on the veldt.

"At first I lost my way through following a spoor a long way across the sand, thinking it was the spoor of the missing horses and mule; but I found it was two mares and a foal belonging to some Boers; and by this time I was close to the mountains, so I climbed up in order to get a better view of the country, when a heavy thunderstorm came on and I took shelter under some rocks. Here some bovians (large monkeys, a species of *cynocephalus*) attacked me, coming quite close and showing their great teeth, and I had to drive them off with stones. As soon as the storm was over I started to come back to the waggon, and walked till night, but could see nothing of it. Knowing I was lost in the mountains, I climbed a hill, and watched in the hope of seeing the camp-fire, but could see nothing. I had no food, no water, and not even a bit of tobacco to console myself with, so I lay down under a bush to sleep. I could not sleep, however, because the monkeys kept up such a barking, and presently another heavy storm came on, drenching me through, but I

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was glad of this as I managed to catch a little water in my hat. Presently the moon began to shine, and I looked about for some water-pools, but could find none. There were no rocks with holes to hold the water, and the ground was so dry that the rain had all soaked in.

"All that I could see was a number of large monkeys sitting on the rocks, and then I was afraid, and started to walk again. All next day I walked away from the mountains, and late in the afternoon met some Boers who had lost their horses. They asked me if I had seen them, but my tongue was so dry that I could not speak, and made signs to them, asking for a drink of water. They gave me a little, and then I told them I was lost, and asked how far it was to Abram's Dam, thinking I must be near there. They said I was twelve hours from the dam, and only two hours from the Orange River. One of them then rode away towards the hills, and came back with a cow's-horn full of water. If it had not been for that I could never have reached the river; my feet were blistered, and I was starving, and the Boers could not give me anything to eat.

"It seemed an age before I saw the green trees on the river-banks, and then, although it was nearly dark, I scrambled down to the water, walked into it up to my waist, and drank. It tasted better than any Cape wine, and all my aches and pains seemed to leave me as I stood in the water. The sensation was so pleasant that I must have stood there nearly an hour. And when I came out I lay down on the sand and fell fast asleep. The sun was quite high when I awoke, feeling refreshed, but very hungry. Seeing a kind of cactus which I thought might be good to eat, I cut some of the thick

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leaves and began to chew it; it tasted bitter, but was nice and cool, but just as I was going to swallow it it began to burn my mouth. I spat it out and ran to the river to wash my mouth out, but my tongue and lips were quite blistered, and my mouth and throat felt as if they were skinned, and began to swell. I sat by the river and kept filling my mouth with water, but it was a long time before it ceased to burn. Then I got up and walked along the bank of the river, till a Kaffir on a horse overtook me and gave me some mealies, which I was obliged to eat, though it hurt me to swallow them, my mouth was so sore. At night I slept on the sand again, and walked on all next day till I met a Boer, and asked him if he had seen you. He said, 'Yes;' a waggon had camped on his land the night before, and was going to Kheis, which was only four hours' distance from there; so I struggled on till I came to Peter Smidt's house, who told me he had heard you asking after me, and gave me some milk, and offered to lend me a horse to ride on here, as he knew you were camping near the beacon."

Such was Jan's story, told with many breaks, owing to his sore mouth and his half-famished condition. But he seemed to forget everything in his pleasure at being safe once more, and in the anxiety to know that he was forgiven and that we had not suffered by waiting for him. Poor Jan! He had paid for his experience, and I was only too relieved to see him safe and sound again to think of saying one word of blame.

It was quite late at night before Jan had finished relating his adventure; so Mr. Davis, who had stopped to listen, stayed all night, making himself quite at home under our waggon, with a couple of rugs for

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bed-clothes, and a taste or two of our Cape brandy—a thing not often seen there—as a "nightcap."

The Irishman was going to Wilkerhout's Drift next day, so we arranged to make an early start together; but just at daybreak, on going round to stir up my men, I found one of the mules and Mr. Davis's mare missing. Kert took up their spoor, and tracked them both to the veldt, but did not return till nearly noon, so that our early start was knocked on the head. Meanwhile, old Abram, having been reminded by Kert of his promise to give us a sheep, drove up his flock, from which we selected one, which was soon caught, killed, cut into strips, peppered and salted, and rolled up in a sack. The skin and head and offal were given to the principal Bushwoman, who had brought us wood and water, and she and her companions quickly ate up the entrails raw, after simply stripping them through their fingers.

The Irishman had been gone an hour before we were ready, and as soon as the runaways were captured we started, being anxious to catch him up in case his help should be necessary if we got stuck in a sand-hill, of which there were several high ones in sight. The little mules pulled splendidly, and we soon left the beacon behind us, and came to a couple of miserable wattle-and-daub huts, standing amid some thousands of acres of stone; not a blade of grass or a bush to be seen. Outside the huts stood the proprietor, a fine-looking, goodnatured old man, Kert Van Veys by name, holding the office of "veldt cornet," a kind of magistrate among the Bastards.

After the usual hand-shaking and inquiry about "the war," he offered us coffee—a mixture of coffee-"grounds" and "ground" of another kind, to wit,

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clay. A cup of cold water would have been far more acceptable, but I shut my eyes, and by dint of a powerful draft upon the imagination swallowed the nauseous liquor as if it were nectar.

The nearest pasturage to the barren wilderness which this squatter had selected was about three miles off, and we outspanned amid quite a variety of vegetable growths. There was the "Bushman's potato," a bulbous plant, with green leaves spotted with brown, which contained a good deal of water. I tasted the root, and found it a little bitter, but not unpleasant. Then there was another bulb, with an oblong, dark-green, glossy leaf, which Kert said was the principal food of the monkeys. Next we found a leaf resembling that of the lily of the valley, which Kert said was very poisonous. Here also we came across the first sama I had seen. This plant is invaluable to both man and beast on the desert. It is the "wild water-melon," resembling the cultivated variety in appearance, both internally and externally, and serves both as food and drink for human beings as well as cattle and horses, its fleshy body containing a quantity of watery juice, and its seeds a considerable proportion of oil. It yields two crops in the year, and the second crop was just now beginning to appear through the yellow sand, while the first crop, hard and dry, with ripe black seeds, still lay on the ground. The ripened fruit will lie for a year without decaying, provided there is no rain. I tasted one of these wild melons—just to get my hand in, for we might have to live almost entirely on them as we advanced into the desert—and found it very bitter. Kert, however, said that when young they were generally sweet, getting

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more bitter as they got older; but that this flavour would not be so strong when cooked.

While I was making these gastronomical experiments, Kert went into a transport of joy at finding some "Bushman's rice"—a species of ant, with broad black heads and long fat bodies, looking like gentles with feet. Taking a handful of these he poured them into his mouth and chewed them with the greatest gusto, smacking his lips as they disappeared down his throat.

Having thus passed from botany to entomology, I bethought me of some paper boxes I had brought on purpose to collect insect specimens. Most of the insects we saw were coleoptera, no doubt well-known; but I thought of my old friend, Jenner Weir, who was an enthusiast in such matters, and would appreciate any attempt to gratify his passion for insects, and any addition, however trifling, either to his collection or to his knowledge. Then I found some wild bees, of which I was anxious to send some specimens to my brother (a bee-keeper and bee-scientist), and altogether we had quite a campaign among the wealth of insect-life. Not the least interesting of our "finds" were the ants, of which I collected thirteen distinct species that afternoon, on a space not twenty feet square. We broke open one of the tall houses of the termites, or "white ants," little insects which can hardly be termed ants, for they have neither the shape nor the colour of Sir John Lubbock's little, ruddy, slender-waisted friends,—unless, indeed, they are so called on account of their industry. The tall, conical mounds which they erect, binding the grains of sand by means of a kind of gum, which exudes from their

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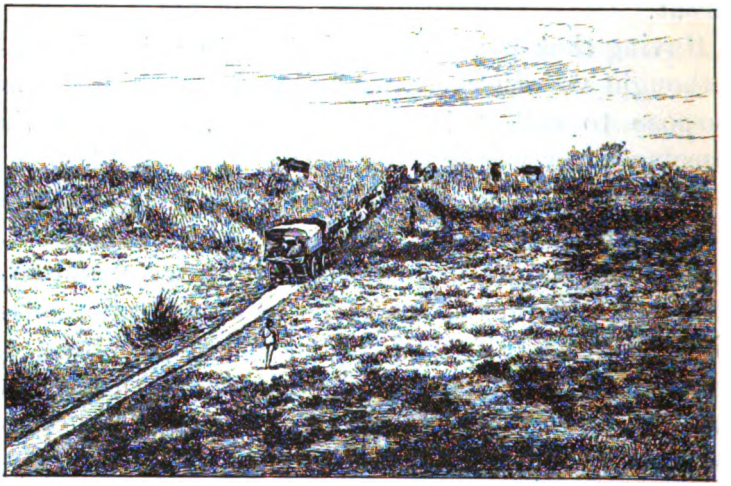
round, transparent head, into a solid, compact mass—so hard that in dry weather it takes a pick to break its house open—are to be met with in thousands; yet one would think it must take a century to build one of them, every grain of sand being first quarried, as it were, underground, and brought to the surface through innumerable tunnels before being added to the structure. These paragons of industry—no "eight hours



CROSSING THE KALAHARI.

a day" among these masons—are food for the ant-eater, for the koran, for the partridge and other birds, and last, but not least, for the Bushman.

We inspanned about 6 p.m., and drove over hill and valley—the latter in the shape of hard patches of limestone, the former soft heaps of sand—until about nine o'clock, we came to the very worst sand-dune we had yet encountered. The wheels were up to the hubs, and the mules up to their knees, in the loose, dry

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sand, and it was all uphill; but we managed to move along until the leading mules appeared high above the level of the waggon, as if they had suddenly taken it into their heads to ascend, Pegasus-like, heavenward, but were held down by the weight of the waggon.

"We are stuck, Jan," I said; "it's no use lashing the poor brutes; they will pull till pulling is useless, and then they won't move. We will outspan and make some coffee. Perhaps some one will come by before morning and give us a lift. Hark! what's that? I heard a whip crack! There is a waggon coming across to our left. We must be right off the track. I will go and see who it is while you outspan." So saying, I made for the direction in which I had heard the sound, and luckily fell in with a team and an empty waggon going towards Kheis. They agreed to help us out of our difficulty, and after some little delay had transferred their team to our waggon. Kert and I each hung on to a *reim* attached to the leading oxen to steer them towards the road, and then the slashing and shouting commenced. After much plunging and snorting we advanced a few paces, when the strap broke in my hand, and my ox stopped, while I fell headlong into the sea of sand. The damage repaired, we made another attempt, and had pulled up about ten feet, when the driver called, "Whoa!" A few minutes' breathing-space and we tried again. This time my ox plunged so that he came to grief, and rolled over nearly on to old Kert; but, amid shouts and smacks of the whip, he got up again; and then Lulu, who was standing aside holding the mules, cried, "Hurrah! she comes; keep them going till you're over the rise!"

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Pull! snort! yell! crack! stumble! and the leaders are over the ridge. "Good! she's over!" shouted Lulu, and away we went down the opposite slope, Kert and I just managing to keep ourselves from under the feet of the excited beasts.

What a piece of luck! We should get to Wilkerhout's Drift to-night after all, instead of being left benighted on a sand-hill! Those oxen—or their owners—well deserved the 2*s*., which was all that was asked for their services; but when it came to begging coffee, tobacco, and brandy in addition, I left to Kert the unpleasant but necessary duty of refusing. The old Bushman would rather give his heart's blood than see the brandy doled out to strangers. This he loved better than anything on earth, and he nearly broke his heart the day before when I gave his old friend Abram a little in a bottle. So our friends had to be content with the florin, and with the hearty "good-nights" and expressions of heartfelt thanks with which we parted from them; and, taking care not to get off the track again, we reached Wilkerhout's Drift about the witching hour of midnight.

The mules were made fast, and a group of tired, played-out men fell asleep. If the *genius loci* had any influence on a sleeping man's mind my dreams ought to have been of Sindbad the Sailor, and Aladdin's Lamp, of "marble halls," and "diadems rich and rare," of Golconda and El Dorado; for the ground on which we lay was the possible depository of wealth untold. It was in this neighbourhood that Kert had found the 180-carat diamond, of which he had so often talked in London, and which had been one of the lures that had led me to undertake this journey. But even the

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"potentiality of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice" did not disturb my rest; it was sleep, and not diamonds, that I was then most in need of, and "Nature's soft nurse" soon "laid mine eyelids down and steeped my senses in forgetfulness" alike of stones and sand, of diamonds and desert.

Next morning, at break of day, we luxuriated in a swim in the river while breakfast was cooking, and that meal finished we sent Jan off to the veldt to find the horses and mules, while Lulu, Kert, and I went prospecting. Taking us up a hill covered with small pebbles, Kert pointed out a *whithaat boom* (white ass tree): "There," said he, "that's where I found the 180-carat diamond, close to that tree." We searched and searched, and scratched the surface over and over, and most carefully; but no diamond was to be seen. Then we began to doubt the old Bushman just a little bit. Lulu took him apart and questioned him, to see if he would still tell the same story; and while doing so an old man came up to them, and addressed Kert:—

"What, Kert, looking for more diamonds? Have you found any more?"

Kert was shrewd; he dissembled. "I am going with these white men shooting on the Kalahari," said he.

"Ah! hunting is better than looking for diamonds. Come, Kert, where was it you found that big stone?"

Evidently the fact was pretty well known that Kert *had* found a diamond; but he averred that he had never told any one but us the exact spot. Our faith in him began to revive; but it would not do to go scratching about any more just now, so we deferred further operations till to-morrow.

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Next morning, before the sun had begun to peep over the hill, Lulu and I had dug a hole several feet square, and a foot or two deep, but no diamonds rewarded our labours. Our hands were blistered, and our backs ached, and we came to the unanimous opinion that we were not constitutionally fitted to be diamond-diggers, and resolved to have another look over the surface. Having picked up some "boart," and a few garnets and other stones, such as are found in conjunction with diamonds at the fields, I returned to the pit we had dug, resolved to sift the stuff again more carefully. Presently, while sitting on the edge of the hole, with my hands full of "stuff," Lulu came back to me, and addressed me thus:—

"I'm quite satisfied that Kert has told the truth about that diamond, and that he did actually find it here. Perhaps you are sitting at the mouth of the richest diamond-mine in the world. But I would not stay here to work it for the biggest gem in creation. What are riches compared to comfort? To come 12,000 miles to roast under this broiling sun; to get half-blinded with dust; to drink mud out of the puddles in the road; to sleep in a waggon on a hard board; to never take your clothes off, except to wallow in the dirt, for you cannot call it swimming;—do you call this comfort. I'll bet I've swallowed more than my allotted peck of dirt in the last three weeks; so give me a cottage, and you shall have the diamond-mine."

"Never mind, my boy; if you come diamond-hunting you must make the best of it. But make yourself happy; though I'm satisfied there are diamonds here, it is another matter to prove that they are in paying quantities; we can't prove it by digging holes, so

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the best thing for us to do is to go on for the little people, look out for the cattle ranche, and return by way of Upington, and get our claim to the land acknowledged by Mr. Scott, the Commissioner for the Bastard territory. Let us pack up and start to-morrow. We shall soon be in the hunting-grounds along the Schurve Berg range, and then out with your camera, and photograph away to your heart's content."

"All right; do what you like, and I'm with you; but don't try and fool yourself into the belief that you are having comfort, for you're not. It's hardship."

"Yes; but it's healthy."

"We could get that much nearer home, and at much less cost. However, you're the boss; give your orders."

And so we agreed to think we were having lots of fun; shouldered our pick and shovel, and started for the waggon; and sending old Kert on ahead, to buy a couple of sheep and some coffee from a friend of his, named Wells—an old sailor who had strayed out here and married a Bastard woman,—followed him, leisurely strolling along the deep bank of the river, shooting pigeons and so-called pheasants—the latter resembling guinea-fowls more than pheasants,—and wild geese. The pheasants were very shy, and to get within range we had to run up the little sand-hillocks and behind the thorn-bushes, and drive them out from the other side. In this way we got just two. The geese, again, were very hard to kill, for unless hit in some vital part they could carry away half a pound of shot without difficulty. At thirty yards, No. 6 seemed to have no effect on them. But here the people use nothing

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smaller than No. 4, as you never know whether you will flush a hyena or a hare, an eland or an elephant. Not that there was much chance just here of any game bigger than spring-bok, which still come annually to the river in herds of from 100 to 10,000 at a time. Such a herd was on the other side of the river the week before we arrived, and had moved on towards the Carnarvon district. But all other large game had been hunted out within a fortnight's journey into the Kalahari.

It took us about three hours to get to Wells's shop, which consisted of a waggon, with a small tent pitched by the side of it to serve as the "private residence." The proprietor of the establishment was engaged showing the "latest Paris fashions" to a Kaffir woman —both of them squatting on their hams on the ground by the side of the waggon, with a pile of prints and other stuff between them. The old lady required a print dress, of course in the latest fashion, though whether she asked for one of the new patent "dress-improvers" I did not stop to inquire. These *articles de luxe* would scarcely form part of Mr. Wells's select stock, for they would be at a discount in this country, the majority of his customers being Koranna women, to whom Providence has already supplied a natural protuberance sufficient to show off Worth's latest productions to perfection. A Paris belle would surely break her heart, and permanently spoil her complexion by turning "green with jealousy," at the sight of one of these dusky belles of the desert, with her natural "dress-improver," warranted not to fall off and always to retain its shape, supplied by Nature in that state of perfection to which Art can never attain.

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As we approached this distant representative of the immortal Mantalini, he forsook his customer and came forward to greet us. He claimed Scotch origin, but his speech betrayed a closer relationship to the Celts than to the Gaels. However, Scotch or Irish, he was now a "naturalized" Bastard, and was consequently shunned by most of the white men that came this way. He introduced me to his wife and children. The latter were of all colours—some black enough to be pure Kaffirs, others brown of different shades, and others more like yellow-skinned Celestials. I put my foot in it by asking whether one of the children—a not bad-looking girl of eight or nine—was "Bushman" or "Kaffir;" but managed to get out of the difficulty by explaining that I was not used to the country, and got confused with the different coloured skins I saw; adding that I only asked because the child was so pretty. This was balm to the wounded heart of the jealous father. They all spoke Dutch, though they could also talk in the Koranna tongue.

Adjoining the tent Wells had made an attempt to keep up a garden, which he irrigated with water drawn from the river by means of a tin pail and a rope, running through a pulley fixed to a tree. An old nigger was the engine that worked this pump, and to judge by the looks of the few pumpkin vines, and of the dilapidated cabbages, one would think the machinery must be frequently out of repair. On the river were two small row-boats, which constituted the ferry. Cattle and horses had to swim over, behind the boat, while waggons required to be taken apart before they could cross, the operation generally occupying about half a day. A party of passengers were waiting to be ferried across

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while we were there. Among them was a Bastard, named White Nelse, owing to the peculiarly light complexion of his skin. He was as fair as a blonde, and had quite the features of a European; at any rate, he would have passed for a Boer anywhere, though only a half-caste. His wife, on the other hand, also a half-breed, was nearly black, and it was curious to notice the children of this strangely-assorted pair. One daughter was as black and had hair as woolly as any negro; another was a yellow-skin, with wavy white hair; while two boys were coffee-coloured. They were all clad in rags, the holes in which exposed their skins to quite as great an extent as they covered them; and they did not look half so decent as some of their Kaffir servants, who wore merely a small piece of cloth round their loins.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Jan gets into trouble—My best horse is drowned—Hurrah for life on the desert!—Stuck again!—Swapping mules for oxen—News from Khartoum—A "clever" trader—Riding on Ox-back—A visit from the Hill Bushmen—A sculptured cave—A native dance and concert—Hunting and eating the hyena—A day among the wild fowl—A floral "desert"—Digging for water—We organize a big hunt—Chasing an ostrich I lose my way—A supper of ostrich-meat—A night in the desert with Death for a bed-fellow.

After listening to some of Wells's stories of the Koranna war, we walked back to our waggon, by moonlight, in time for a supper of stewed pigeons, to which we took our best appetites. The first person we saw was Jan, sitting alone a little way from the waggon. We thought he had had a tiff with Kert, as they were always wrangling about who did the most work, and so took no notice; but while we were at supper Kert said Jan was in trouble.

"What's the matter? Have you and he fallen out?"

"No; but the horse has fallen in."

"The horse has what?"

"Has fallen into the river."

I looked round and saw only the mare—"Lady Anna"—tied up. It was the best of the two that was missing.

"Tell Jan to come here."

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And Jan presently came, hanging down his head, and looking very sheepish.

"What's come of the horse, Jan? Tell me!"

"Yah! maister; die horse he vas run fass down de hill, and could not catch him any. Dey all go in de bushes, and before I could down run dey all come out. Only he no come. I can never help it, maister. So fass as I could I run, and I cum by die vatter. I on his spoor on die steep bank, and I no could see die spoor come out again. I run down to die drift to see if can kotch him, but no can't."

"Did he go under so that you could not see him before you ran to the ford?"

"Yaas, maister, he did maister. I never seed him more. I kem to die vatter, I see spoor, and never see hoss."

"He was haltered of course, and could not swim. Why did you not jump in and cut the halter, or pull it over his head?"

"I can no make dat: he go under so quick."

"Then you saw him go under?"

"Yaas, maister—no, maister."

"Jan, you are lying. You have been told lots of times never to take the horses and mules to drink knee-haltered. They run into the water when they are very thirsty, and though the water may be shallow at first, it may get deep directly. I hired you as a competent man; you say you have driven waggons and managed mules and horses for years, and yet you are so lazy that you not only lose my horses, but you go and lose yourself, and now you have drowned my best horse, through disobedience. You promised the other day to attend to everything I told you; so

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you may take your choice. You may quit me here, and I will call it square, and say nothing about the value of the horse; or you may go on with me, and I will feed you until you work out the price of the horse."

"Dank you, maister. I will go and work hard for you, maister, till I pay, maister. I not know what Gott make so bad chances this time; every day go bad."

"It's your own fault; don't go and try to blame any one else. It's your own infernal laziness."

As the wretched "boy" turned away, Lulu said, "It does not much matter where we go or what we do now. There is only lightning left to do us any harm; we have had everything else except that and poisoned arrows. Never mind, we are after diamonds and cattle-ranches. Hurrah for life on the desert!"

That night we killed the two sheep Kert had bought, and cutting them up into strips, hung them out to dry, in case we should fall short of fresh meat; and next morning started at daybreak, keeping the Schurve Berg close on our right. As I took the reins Jan smacked the long whip, and away we went, Kert riding ahead on "Lady" to scout. In two hours we came to a succession of very steep sand-hills. There was no avoiding them. Mounting the first eminence, I took a survey, and could see nothing but billows of sand in every direction, with an intervening space of from 50 to 150 yards of level ground between each rise. The only thing to do was to give the mules their heads—and the whip—and charge for them, giving the beasts a little breathing-time on the intervening flats. These were sometimes hard ground, but

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oftener of sand; but I was convinced, however, that the sand merely served as a covering to a great expanse of stony ground, and that the "dunes" were formed of heaps of stones, on which the drifting sand had accumulated. But for the sand the country would have been impassable: no vehicle could have passed over its bare rocks. As it was, I was amazed at the pluck with which the little mules hauled us over the sandy waves. At last, however, we came to a slope that proved too much for them, and we stuck half-way up. Not all their efforts could move us. I had made up my mind not to unload the waggon, for if we once began to do that at every obstacle, there would be no end to it; so I rode back to Wells to see if I could trade my mules for some oxen. But he would not have them. He was used to oxen, he said, and besides, if a mule died he could not eat him, while a dead ox was good beef. However, he knew a trader a few miles away who used mules, and might take them in exchange for some oxen, so he saddled his horse and rode there with me.

The trader was a German Jew from Frankfort, named Hochchild—a jovial fellow, who jumped at the idea of swapping oxen for mules. I asked him for four oxen for a mule, with yokes and chains to count against the harness; but he would only give me sixteen altogether, and that only on condition that the mules took his fancy. After some higgling we sealed the bargain with a drink of "Cape smoke," and then, as it was quite dark, he invited me to a supper of springbok, and to stay all night in his waggon. Of course we exchanged all the news; and here it was I first heard of the fall of Khartoum and the death of

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Gordon, whose name and fame had penetrated even to this back corner of the world. And then my Semitic host let me into some of the secrets of his traffic with the natives, and proudly told me how clever he was in cheating them, by adding the date into his account and so forth. It never occurred to him that such practices were dishonest. They were "clever."

Before the break of day we were on our road to the stranded waggon, with sixteen oxen and yokes all complete, driven by two Koranna Kaffirs, and did not reach our destination till noon. Hochchild wanted to see how the mules could pull, so I hitched them to the waggon just as it was.

"Will you take them if they pull the waggon out of that?"

"Yah!" was his eager reply; "but they cannot do that."

"We'll see," I replied, gathering up the reins and getting them all even in their collars. Then I gave the word to Jan, who rent the air with smacks and shouts, and the little beasts settled down till their bellies nearly touched the sand. In another second they would have stopped, but the waggon luckily moved, which gave them fresh courage, and they buckled to till they had gone about twenty feet, when I stopped them. After a few minutes' breathing-space, I set them to it again, and this time they took the waggon to the top of the slope.

"What do you think of those little rats?"

"They just de raats to soot me; I dakes dem; six more von dem raats vood traw you some anyvears."

The bargain was completed, and we inspanned the oxen; not without difficulty, for they were an odd lot

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picked up here and there, and had never pulled together before. For an hour all our united shouting and slashing would not induce them to pull the waggon down the hill. Some would go one way and some the other; but at last, after a good many changes, we managed to get the right pair as leaders and the best wheelers, and then they went away like steam. Stopping on the flat, we delivered the mules with their harness over to their new owner; engaged one of the Kaffir cattle-drivers—a tall, slim fellow, with a voice like a tame pigeon and a pair of such spindleshanks that he looked as if his legs would break off short or tie themselves into a knot at every step, who gave us some hints as to the best road (or rather the best direction, for road there was none) to take; exchanged adieux with the trader; and plunged once more into Kalahari's ocean of sand.

Very soon afterwards we were surprised to see several half-breeds come along riding on oxen. A stick through the animal's nose answered the purpose of a bit, to which was attached a string on either side for a bridle; a sheep-skin and a blanket, with surcingle to hold them on, to which stirrups were fastened, answered for a saddle. The oxen ambled and trotted, and seemed easy to manage. As one of the "curiosities" of the country, Lulu took a photograph of the group.

At dark we outspanned; the oxen being tied to the chain for the night, and let loose at daybreak for a couple of hours, during which we shot partridges as they came to drink. Then after our matutinal cup of coffee we inspanned, drove on for about four hours, outspanned again till five or six o'clock, and then went on for another five or six hours. This was our usual

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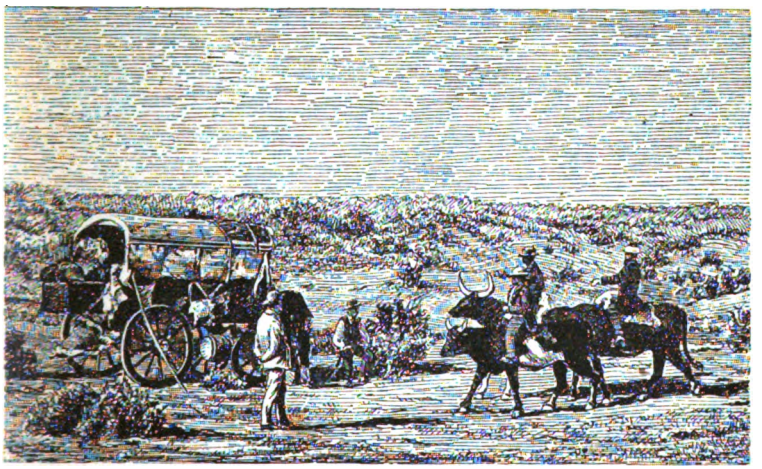
daily routine, interrupted only by the exigencies of watering the cattle once a day. The rains, however, had been very heavy, and most of the pans were full; but as they were at irregular intervals it was difficult to time ourselves so as to reach them always at the right time. The driver preferred giving them a good drink in the morning at first starting, but not oftener; saying that if they had water more frequently they would be always wanting it, whereas by getting it



RIDING ON OX-BACK.

only once a day they could, at a pinch, go for two days, or even three, without injury.

On the fifth day, some berg—or hill—Bushmen came down to us from the mountains, saying they had heard us popping at the partridges. They were tall, stalwart fellows, much bigger than the average Bushman of the plains. Two of them carried guns, one a flint-lock, the other a nipple-gun; but the rest were armed only with poisoned arrows. They all knew

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Kert, and invited him and us to pay them a visit at their home in the mountains. Lulu accepted the invitation, and found a large party of them living in a cave, the sides of which were decorated with some very old drawings and sculptures; the first done on the smooth stone with some kind of black paint—probably the same as that which the women use to bedaub their cheeks,—the latter lightly cut into the rock. Lulu

WALL DRAWINGS IN HILL-BUSHMEN'S CAVE.

made a sketch of some of these rude works ot art, which is reproduced in the accompanying block.

On their return Lulu and Kert were followed by a party of some men and women, who were much interested in us and our belongings. They looked wonderingly at us when Kert showed them my selection of insects, and when Lulu levelled the camera at them, in the hope of getting their photographs, they were so frightened that the women and children ran

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away, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Kert persuaded them to come back. Unlike both Bastards and Boers they abstained from begging for everything that they could see, accepting whatever we gave them with a gesture of thanks. Some of the women were quite yellow-skinned, in fact, nearly white; men and women alike wore their hair in short tufts, showing the broad formation of the back of the head. Their clothes consisted of a piece of skin, about the size of your hand, suspended in front, while some of the women had, in addition, a spring-bok skin hung behind. Their food consisted principally of roots, with an occasional feed of game, and a special feast whenever they managed to steal a few sheep or cattle in Griqualand.

These Bushmen are as little known in the colony as they are in London; and owing to their lazy, improvident mode of life, they are soon likely to be known only as a tradition, for they are evidently decreasing in numbers. If Nature does not furnish food, so that they can get it without trouble, they go without. The only effort they make is when stalking game, and when at last they succeed in killing a bok, they will sit and gorge till they can gorge no more—in other words, till it is all gone, never thinking of the morrow. I even saw two Bushmen sit down to a spring-bok at sundown, and never leave it till noon next day, when there was none to leave.

We gave our visitors some docha, a kind of wild hemp used by them as tobacco, and when they became excited under its influence they treated us to the spectacle of a dance—if the stamping of the feet on the ground, accompanied by guttural sounds, to which they kept time, could be so called. Then they gave

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us a concert, each player blowing a reed tuned to a particular pitch, but capable of producing only one note, according to its size. At a distance the effect was not unpleasing, but at close quarters the music was anything but melodious. The use of these primitive instruments they were said to have learnt from the Damaras.

Two of the Bushmen volunteered to accompany us for a little way, and to look out for roots, bulbs, and insects. Among the plants there was an abundance of a kind of bulb, green outside but brown inside, and looking something like an onion, but with a flat leaf, and producing a rather nice flower. This bulb, which the Bushmen eat, tastes, as well as looks, something like an onion.

These Bushmen told us that in the country to our left there had been no rain since March; that all the sama were gone, and there was neither water nor game. Ostriches were still left, as they could exist without water; and when the rains came, so that the hunters could follow them up, they anticipated a good harvest of feathers. And yet here the country was quite verdant; grass was plentiful, the sama promised to be abundant, and vegetation generally was rapidly advancing. When digging out a porcupine we found the sand quite saturated with water three inches beneath the surface—and yet there had been only one heavy rain.

Riding slowly along, one of the Bushmen called out, "Seeah, boss" ("Come, boss"); and as Kert and I ran forward they pointed to a wolf's (i.e. hyena) spoor, which we followed for about an hour, the Bushmen leading, till they came to a sudden halt, and twisting

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their fingers over their mouths as a signal for silence, motioned us to come forward. There, not six yards away, was a large hyena, fast asleep. I raised my rifle and fired, and the beast jumped up, and fell back dead, the ball having hit him just behind the fore-leg. In ten minutes he was *minus* his skin, and then one of the Bushmen fell to and cut him into strips, while the other hurriedly made a fire and cooked the meat. The two of them sat down to the feast, and never left off till they had placed themselves outside the whole of the carcase.

As we proceeded, through a belt of grass nearly knee high—which reminded me of the Western Prairies, except that here the grass grew in little bunches a few feet apart—the Lange Berg came into view on our right, and the country changed from sand to hard limestone, partly covered with small bushes, but without grass, which grows only on the red and yellow sand, or on a mixture of sand and clay. Then followed a tract, about fifty miles wide, of country totally devoid of water. All the small pans were dried up, and the cattle had to go without water for two days and a night; but fortunately grass was plentiful, so that they were better able to withstand the thirst. At last we came in sight of a very large vley, which the cattle had no sooner smelt than they set up a loud bellowing, and put on an extra spurt in order to get to the water. We outspanned about half a mile off, and let the thirsty oxen go by themselves to drink, so as not to frighten the innumerable flocks of birds that lined the edges of the pool and flitted over its surface; for our larder was getting low, and we were necessarily pot-hunters. We waited till the moon was up before going down to reconnoitre the

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pool, and find out the best way of getting the biggest bag with the least amount of trouble. The vley was some three hundred yards across, with a number of long, narrow arms or bays running up into the sand, and a small island near the middle, on which we could distinguish a number of large birds. My plan of operations was to go down before daybreak next morning, and wade or swim out with one of the Bushmen to this island, while Lulu, Kert, and the rest took up their positions, each behind a bush, at the head of one of the long bays.

The natives use a block of willow wood as a kind of life-buoy in fording deep rivers, and one of these I had brought with me from the Orange River. On it I placed my gun, ammunition, and clothes, and then made for the island, but found that the water was nowhere deeper than my waist. We were all in position before daybreak, and waited for the light. About twenty yards in front of me I saw several flamingoes standing in the water, and beyond them a number of white birds slowly swimming about. The Bushmen took aim at the former, while I, lying flat on my stomach, so as to get on a level with them, fired at the latter, and mowed a lane through them, emptying the second barrel as the rest took wing. This was the signal for a regular fusillade from all sides of the pool. Presently a flock of geese flew over my head, followed by a flight of black-and-white birds, screaming aloud and speeding like scud before the wind. As I fired, they wheeled round, the noise of their wings sounding like a hurricane, and dropped down, as if following their dead companions. Just as they spread out their long legs to alight on the water, I fired two more shots in quick

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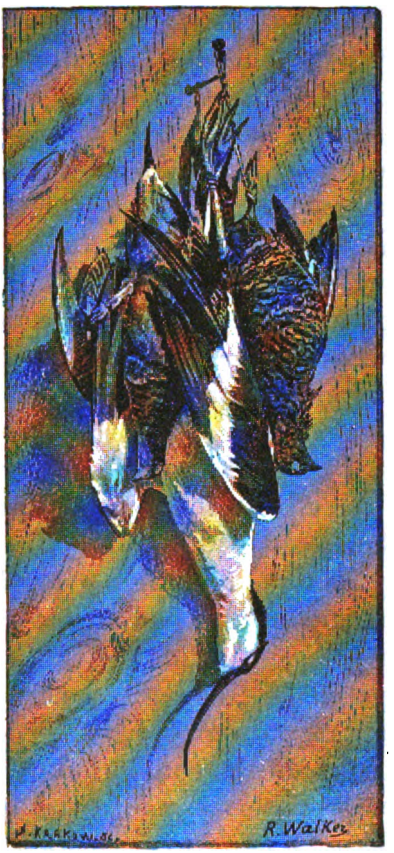
succession, and they fled, leaving their dead and wounded behind them. By this time the air was full of birds—large cranes slowly flapping their heavy wings, and adding their double-bass voices to the din; geese remonstrating with us for disturbing their repose; erratic snipe darting hither and thither; and frightened flamingoes trailing their long stilts behind them.



SOME KALAHARI WILD FOWL.

Then hostilities ceased; the battue was over. Two flamingoes, three cranes, one with a crested head, over a dozen geese, thirty-five of the black-and-white birds, fifteen ducks, of which ten were quite white, and other small fry, had fallen in our corner. These black-and-white birds were quite new to me, so I afterwards preserved some of their skins, and ascertained that they were avocets. Their legs were an ashy-grey colour, their beak black, and their tail a bright orange. They were evidently more waders than swimmers, the feet

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being only half-webbed, and their legs ten inches long. From tip of beak—which was four and a half inches long—to end of tail they measured sixteen inches. They were very fat, and very fine eating. While collecting these I ran into a submerged prickly bush, so I changed my mode of locomotion, and floated about on my back till the bag was complete. Then, hearing Lulu and Kert shouting, I made for the shore, and found he had shot a curious "bird" in the shape of a large blue bull wildebeest (gnu), which had charged at him out of the water before it was light, while Kert had killed a hartebeest, besides an assortment of wild-fowl, sufficient, with all the other bags, to stock a poulterer's shop. We were busy all the rest of the day, plucking, salting, and peppering the birds, and cutting the venison into strips, and, after slightly salting it, hanging it up to dry, taking care to keep it out of the sun's rays, which, the natives say, cause it to smell bad.

Directly to the west of this vley—which was called Libuschani, and was first visited by Campbell in 1813—lay Kert's old hunting-ground; and the old fellow was very anxious for us to make a détour into it, promising us some splendid shooting. But the sama was not ripe enough, and the pans would probably be all dry, so that we were obliged to decline the tempting proposal. In the end, however, we made up our minds to compromise the matter by filling up with water, and making a two or perhaps a three days' trip in a north-westerly direction, which would not take us too far out of our course, and would bring us within reach of Rubini, where we should be sure of getting water. So early next morning we started, Kert in high glee at finding himself once more in his old haunts, riding ahead on "Lady" as an advance-guard, and picking

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out the best road—if there could be any best road in a sea of sand. Hill followed hill, and valley, valley, in never-ending succession, covered with grass, from beneath which the sama and wild cucumber plants were just appearing, with here and there a bush or stunted tree, and an occasional oasis of lovely flowers. One especially took my fancy—a bulbous plant, with large, tapering roots and dark-green leaves, somewhat resembling lily or flag-leaves, and with clusters of white flowers, ribbed with pink, whose fragrance was wafted far and wide, literally—

"Wasting their sweetness on the desert air."

We made a long day of it, stopping occasionally to gather some of the different flowers and seeds, and to collect the roots, and did not camp for the night till eleven o'clock. Next morning Kert and the Bushmen went out to reconnoitre, not returning till 4 p.m., when they reported having seen some gems-bok and some ostrich spoor, and advised our getting on as far as possible that night, and arranging for a grand hunt on the following day. So we rode on till ten that night, constantly coming across fresh spoor, and camped on the edge of a dry pan. We had to husband our water, which was now more precious than gold, though the improvident natives would have drunk it all right off, and did not like it when I handed round a limited dole of coffee, and told them they would get no more till breakfast to-morrow. Seeing, however, that there were traces of recent water in the bottom of the pan, I called for shovels and picks, and set all hands at work to dig a pit ten or twelve feet round and six feet deep. The sand seemed a little moister the lower we went, but suddenly bang went the shovel against a

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rock. Taking a pick I found we had struck a stratum of hard gravel.

"It's no use, Boss; there's no water there, and we had better have been sleeping all this time." It was now nearly two o'clock, so we turned in, with the understanding that we should all start at daybreak separately, each man going in a different direction, but with the general idea of forming as wide a circle as possible, into which we were to drive whatever game we might come across. Those who had to go to form the farther side of the circle started first, and while they were gone I ran over to look at the pit we had dug, and was delighted to find about eighteen inches of water in it. I was as pleased as if I had found another diamond mine! The cattle would have water at any rate, and I set off to take my place in the hunt with my mind considerably relieved.

It was not very long before I came across some fresh spoor of ostriches, which I instinctively followed, forgetting for the time all about the circle of which I was supposed to form part of the circumference. The track led across a sand-hill, over the top of which I cautiously peered; no birds in sight, but straight across the flat beneath their course could be distinctly traced. Determined not to be beaten, I followed, crossing sand-hill after sand-hill, flat after flat, till the growing heat and increasing thirst reminded me that the day was advancing. The sun, however, was not yet very high; so I could rest a bit on the shady side of yon bush. After a drink of water from my flask I took out my glass and swept the dunes. Sand, sand, everywhere sand, but not a living creature in sight. As I sat, a feeling of lassitude crept over me, and I thought I might be all the better for a siesta, after

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which I could follow up the track again and return the same way. With this understanding with myself I lay down and was soon fast asleep under a three-thorn bush.

When I awoke the sun indicated that the afternoon was more than half gone. Looking around I saw a herd of gems-bok in one direction, and in another a clump of six ostriches. They were the most valuable, and in another minute I was after them, now crawling on my stomach across the ridge of a sand-hill, now running across the intervening flat, where I could not be seen. Fortunately, the wind was against me, and I managed, after about an hour of alternate running and wriggling, to get within range. They were feeding towards me, and I let them come within 100 yards before I aimed at the cock-bird and fired. Off they all ran, like the wind, giving no sign of being hit, but luckily keeping at right angles to the line of fire, so that I was able to put in another half-dozen shots before they were out of reach. I saw them disappear over first one sand-dune, then another, all running so lightly that they seemed as if they could not have been hit, though I felt certain I had not missed every shot.

Following their spoor for about half an hour I came upon a female lying on the side of a sand-hill struggling to get up; for fear she might succeed, I gave her a shot as she lay, ran up the soft slope as fast as I could, whipped out my knife, severed the vertebræ just behind the head, and started after the others. Getting on top of a very high heap of sand, I looked round, but could see nothing of them; they must have stopped, or they would be visible somewhere. So spurred forward by the hope of overtaking them very soon, I followed the trail. An hour must have passed before I saw the

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old cock sitting down, and stealing up as close as possible, gave him another ball. As he jumped up I fired again, and he staggered. My heart beat fast with excitement; it was nearly sundown, and I had I knew not how many miles to walk back, but I would not go away now without my quarry. It took two more balls to bring him to the ground, and then, spreading his legs out sideways, he fell all of a heap on the sand. His swift feet were powerless, but he could use his beak with effect, as I soon found out, and could tell to an ounce how hard he could pinch. Grasping him by the neck, however, I speedily put a muzzle on him by cutting his throat, and then plucked out his best feathers—all "bloods," though not very long, the season being yet early. Then I began to realize how many miles I had to tramp before reaching the waggon. The wind was blowing pretty hard, and the track by which I had hoped to find my way back would be obliterated; but, famished and fatigued, I took a sip of water, and lighting a fire, cooked a bit of the bird's thigh, which was very palatable, as almost anything would have been to a man with such an appetite. While the piece of "drumstick" was grilling I examined the bird and found he had been shot in the other thigh, and had three other bullets in different parts of the body; and yet he had given me a stern-chase all these miles!

The best thing for me to do now was to find my way back to the hen ostrich, before its body got mauled by the jackals; in the first place, its skin would be useful to the Bushmen when stalking ostriches; secondly, I should be so much nearer home; and thirdly, I should be able to get a supper of ostrich-meat again. It took me a good two hours' hard walking to get back, and I was only just in time, for the

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little grey Kalahari foxes were already prowling around to make sure that the bird was dead, and that no one was concealed near it before coming to close quarters.

After plucking the best feathers, I lay down beside the bird, and casting care to the winds—though taking care to have my gun within reach, in case of a night attack—was soon fast asleep. The barking of the jackals and hyenas woke me two or three times; but with that exception I never slept more soundly. At dawn I woke, and was rubbing the sand out of my eyes, not feeling quite sure where I was, when my eyes lighted on a human face, only a few yards off, its gaze steadily fixed on mine. I seized my gun, but the being, whoever he was, did not flinch, and I thought I must be mistaken, and rubbed my eyes harder, but the only effect was to drive the sand more firmly in than ever. There, straight in front of me, was a human being—a Bushman by his colour—staring and grinning at me, all but his head and shoulders concealed behind a bush, or beneath a slight covering of sand. I approached and called out, but the being answered not, nor moved. It would never speak again. It was the dead body of some poor Bushman who had perished miserably while out hunting, for at his side lay his gun, and on the bush was hung a bunch of ostrich feathers—somewhat weather-worn, but still worth perhaps 20*l*. The desert winds had performed the last office of burial, covering his body with a light pall of sand, leaving only his head exposed. Not an animal had molested this grave—a sure sign that the man had died of thirst; at least so the natives held, asserting that nothing will touch the body of such a man.

There was no doubt that the man had lain down to

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rest beside the bush, overcome with fatigue, thirst, and hunger, and had woke up dead. A shudder went through me as I reflected that my own fate might not be so very different, and that, had it not been for my trusty water-bottle, my bones might already have been keeping his company. Looking round at that moment, what was my dismay to see the bottle lying empty on the place where I had slept! I had omitted to close it overnight, and now I was many hours away from home, and not a drop of water left. Still it was no use crying over water spilt in the desert: I must make the best of it, even if I had to carry my spoil all the way back. So I skinned the ostrich, and was tying my feathers up in a bunch with those of the dead Bushman, when I thought I would take the mummified skull of the man away as a memento. It was with some difficulty that I severed the vertebræ; but at last I succeeded, and then, gathering up my miscellaneous assortment of trophies, shouldered the Bushman's gun on one side, and my own on the other, and began my weary tramp back to the waggon.

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CHAPTER IX.

Lost on the desert—Dying of starvation and fatigue—Eating a poisonous root—The agonies of death—A prey to wild beasts—I am given up for dead—A funeral procession—A runaway Knock at death's door—Milk-and-water—*Café à la* Kalahari—Delicious water—Grass and sama in plenty—Kuis—The chief "Make Haste"—An extortionate chief—Adventures of a desert trader—I enter into partnership with two Bastard hunters—How to cook sama.

I HAD gone on about three hours, when the sun's rays became too much for me, and I put down my burden and rested for a while. How I longed for a cup of water, for a sama, for anything to quench my thirst! Presently I climbed a high sand-dune, hoping to spy some landmark, some sign by which I could steer myself back to the waggons. Here and there I fancied I could trace my previous footsteps when in chase of the ostriches, but the marks were almost obliterated, and they might be the track of some other person. This thought gave me some hope, for it might be that Lulu, Kert, and the rest were looking for me: I would keep as much as possible on the high ground, but it was hard work climbing up and down, and the heat of the sun was stupefying. What would I not give for a drink of water! It was now past noon, so that I must already have walked six hours beneath the almost scorching rays of the sun; I was getting faint for want of food and water, and I might also add faint-hearted from anxiety. The sand-dunes

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were all alike, and I had so completely lost my way that, for all I knew, I might be walking further and further away, or going round and round in a circle, instead of getting nearer to the waggon. In the hope of exciting the salivary glands, and cooling my parched mouth, I had put a button on my tongue; but the sinking sensation, caused by want of food, made me feel giddy, and this tendency was increased by my growing anxiety. I felt I must rest for a bit, and try to find some food. Knowing that the *inchies* (roots) were generally good to eat before they were in flower, I searched for some, and tried to eat them raw; but they were so unpalatable that I had to make a little fire and cook them in the hot sand. I managed to eat a few, and found they not only assuaged my thirst, but relieved me of the dizziness that had been growing upon me; and after sitting still for half an hour I felt better, and climbed up a sand-hill, on the other side of which I could see a herd of gems-bok grazing.

If I could only get near enough to kill one of the cows I might manage to get a little milk, or some blood to drink. I was too weak to attempt to stalk them, so waited patiently, in the hope that they might come within range, as they were grazing towards me. At last they got within about eighty yards, and, taking a steady aim at one of the cows—they are easily distinguished by their horns being thinner, and more tapering than those of the bucks—I fired, and shot her dead in her tracks. Sending two other shots after the flying herd, I rose to my feet, but my head swam, and only by stopping every now and then, and leaning on my rifle for support, could I drag myself along to where the dead cow lay. My tongue and throat were on fire, and I longed for a drink of water, of milk, of

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blood, of anything to drown the scorching, choking sensation; but I was doomed to disappointment. I felt my hands and face begin to swell, a cold shudder passed through my frame, and my trembling knees refused to support me. Suddenly the earth seems to tip up, and all is black. I am falling, but my arms drop helpless at my side, and I can do nothing to save myself—

> So faint I am, my tottering feet
> No more my trembling frame can bear,
> My sinking heart forgets to beat,
> As drifting sands my tomb prepare.

My only feeling is that of burning of the entire body.

Those roots, that I thought so comforting, were poisonous, and this is the beginning of the end. I can feel a numbness growing over me, alternating now and then with the terrible burning sensation. Yes; this must be death. I had not the slightest power to move a limb, but my brain became more and more active. Past, present, and future seemed mingled in one rapid mental panorama, and I began to wonder whether my body would ever be found, or whether I should become the prey of lions and jackals, while picturing to myself the dismay of poor Lulu and the others, when they found I did not return. I was seized with terrible griping pains in the stomach, and a feeling of nausea arose, and as it increased the numbness and burning sensation diminished. Death was not going to be calm and easy. Instead of a narcotic, it was an irritant poison I had taken, and instead of quietly passing away as in a dream, I was to have a struggle with the grim scythe-bearer.

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I tried to raise my hand to put my finger down my throat, but found I still had no power of voluntary motion. Then another sharp spasm drew my legs up, and the muscles of my throat and stomach began to move. Vomiting took place, and then I felt easier. The cramp pains ceased, and I began to have hope that I should cheat old Death after all. I began to breathe more easily. But the burning sensation, inside and outside, remained, and then the feeling supervened that it was only a short respite. Death would claim his victim in the end, for if I remained here long inanimate the wild beasts would find me before the night was over. Perhaps it was already night. I could not see; I could not feel; but I could think and breathe, and hear; and I listened, listened, listened for the slightest sound—for any stealthy footfall; for a rustling in the tall dry grass, for the quick sniff of a beast of prey scenting out its quarry, and for the short growl of delight with which it welcomes its discovery.

Hark! there are footsteps; a quick rustle of the grass, and then a pause; nearer it approaches, then stops again; closer and closer comes the sound, varied now by a quick, short bark. Is it jackal or hyena that has thus tracked me out? If I am bitten, and my blood flows, perhaps this will restore me to consciousness, and to the power of motion. Oh, if I could but move; if I could but open my eyes, and reach my gun; if I could but shout, no cowardly jackal, no sneaking hyena should taste my flesh. But there may be a lion near. If so a sudden spring will soon put an end to my suspense. He will grab me by the shoulder, shake me as a dog does a rat, and carry me off to his lair. Shall I wake up and feel the grip of his teeth,

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and the laceration of his claws, or shall I merely hear him tearing my flesh, and crushing my bones, without feeling the pain? Stay! there is a whining noise close at hand; now comes the snuffling sound of some animal: a quick breathing in my ear. There is no escape. In another moment his teeth will meet in my flesh. I might have met with a more painful death, but hardly with a more horrible one. I had always said I should like to die with my boots on: one must meet death some time, and the exact way and whereabouts are not of much importance. But still this suited me a little too much. The idea of travelling all these miles to become food for wild beasts, of knowing that my last moment had come, and yet lying powerless to move a muscle to save myself; this was more than I had bargained for. Hark! I can hear another distant sound; my prowling visitor is waiting for his friends to come to the feast. Stay! Is that a roar? No! That is a human voice. "Bull! Bull!" It is Kert's voice, calling to my dog. Now the whining at my side has ceased, and I can hear Bull barking, in answer to Kert's call. It was he that was standing beside me a moment ago, and now he has gone to tell him he has found me. He barks furiously as quick footsteps approach, and then I hear Kert exclaim, "Maak goe; die Sieur is dooed" (Be quick; master is dead!). Will they think I am really dead? Shall I be buried alive, instead of being torn to pieces?

"He is cold. He has died of thirst."

"No; he cannot be dead. This gems-bok is not cold; he must have shot it, and those were the three shots we heard about an hour ago."

"Yes; perhaps he wounded the gems-bok, and, getting too near, has been killed by its horns. Let us

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lift him up and see. Ah! here is blood on the sand; and here is his water-can—empty. He would not believe me when I told him a man could not live a day hunting on these sands without water. But now he knows it. Poor Sieur!"

Then I heard Kert talking in Bushman language; evidently he was giving the Bushmen orders what to do. But where was Lulu? Perhaps searching for me in another direction. They were now quite certain I was dead, and perhaps they were going to bury me before they went back to look for him. Then in good Dutch I heard Kert say, "Oons moet hom bring nahe de vaar" (We must carry him to the waggon). I did not feel them touch me; but I soon heard the tramp of their feet, and could tell from their talk that they were carrying me to the waggon. Now all would depend on Lulu's judgment. But perhaps I should not reach the waggon alive. It seemed an age before I heard Lulu's voice shouting in the distance, "Have you found him?"

A solemn "Yah" was all the answer.

"Is he hurt? Put him down easy. What is the matter with him? Speak, Kert!" Lulu called out passionately. "Speak!"

No reply came.

"My God! is he dead?"

"Ek wit nie; Ek denk so" (I don't know; I think so).

"It cannot be!" said Lulu. "Here, let me feel his pulse. Jan! run and fetch me the looking-glass, quick! while I open his shirt. He cannot be dead: it is not possible. Here, feel here, he is warm."

"Here is the glass, sir," said Jan in a half-whisper.

I wonder why it is that every one always speaks in

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a whisper in the presence of the dead. Is it that they are afraid of waking them? Here was I only half dead, and yet they could not wake me.

"Hold the light here! Thank God he breathes: the glass is wet; he is alive. Bring me the brandy; we must pour some down him. Fetch me a spoon. Kert, tell those Bushmen to rub his legs and feet and hands, like this!" and Lulu evidently showed them what to do; but I could feel nothing.

"How stiff his limbs are. I'm afraid we have found him too late. Rub away hard! Jan, rub his hands like this. Now, Kert, lift him up while I give him the brandy.

"How tight his teeth are set together. I don't know how to give him the brandy. Hold his head over that way. Good; I think he has swallowed some. Give me the bottle, Jan: the spoon is between his teeth. Now he has had a good dose. Lay him down gently; now we must all rub as hard as we can!"

That was his favourite cure for everything. Presently a pricking sensation came into my hands and feet, like "pins and needles;" then I could feel the friction of their hands. Old Death had knocked at my door too soon, and would have to call again!

"Rub away!" cried Lulu. "I can feel the flesh getting warm. Look, his lips are moving! He is coming to. He will not die!"

With my sense of touch, my sight also began to return, and I could see a diffused kind of light like when you look at the sunlight with your eyes shut. I tried to close my eyes, but could not. I still had no power to move, nor could I speak, though I could feel my lips trembling. Then they lifted me up again and more brandy was poured into my mouth; this time I

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could feel them lifting me, and tried to help myself, but could not. I attempted to swallow, but failed, though I felt the brandy going down my throat; a few minutes later, however, I could open and shut my eyes, and then recovered the use of my tongue and throat muscles. The first thing I said was "Castor oil," which Lulu administered in the same way as the brandy. Luckily I could not taste it. An hour or so later I could move my hands and arms, and before daylight was able to sit up. All was dark, save for the dim light of the lamp, by the aid of which I could see what a look of satisfaction came over Lulu's face as I gazed round and said, "I'm all right, give me something to eat." He had been watching me all the night, and had anticipated my want by having a tin of warm soup ready. This had such a soothing effect upon me that I fell asleep, and did not wake again till the sun was well up, to find them all sitting round me with anxious faces.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"Matter," said Lulu; "you must tell us that. How are you?"

"Oh! I am all right, thanks to you all, except for a feeling of weakness. Give me some more soup." And then I told them all about it. "By-the-bye," I added, "let the Bushmen go and fetch the feathers and skin, and that gun—not forgetting the skull."

"They will not touch the skull or the gun either," said Kert. "They all believe that is the cause of your being sick."

So Jan was sent with them, and while he was gone Lulu gave me particulars of the hunt which had like to have ended so tragically.

By next day I was quite well again, and felt no

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trace of my recent adventure. The pans were now fast drying up, and we passed some that contained nothing but mud; by scooping a hole we managed to get a little liquid earth, to which we could add a little alum, in order to precipitate some of the suspended matter. This had the effect of throwing down a good deal of the mud, but did not by any means clear it, and at best it was more like clay soup than water Even when "clarified" it looked for all the world like milk-and-water. "You might imagine yourself in London," said Lulu, "with this genuine chalk-and-water—milk-ho!"—and he uttered an unearthly yell that would have done credit to any milk-purveyor's assistant, as he handed in the essence of clay with which we were condemned to make our matutinal coffee.

Not having served my apprenticeship among the Guamo Indians, and not being afflicted, like an Irishman, with "earth-hunger," I confess I did not like coffee *à la Kalahari*, and could not take more than one cup at a meal. Lulu, however, thirsty soul that he was, managed to take more of it: he would even drink the water before it had been boiled. This I never would do, and, however thirsty I might be, always waited till some had been put on the fire, and left to cool. Kert called it "lecher watter" (delicious water); and as for the Bushmen, they would lie down on their stomach, with their face in the hole, and suck up the pure undiluted fluid extract of mother earth as easily as an English navvy in a vertical position will pour a pot of beer down his capacious throat.

Whenever we were near water we filled every available vessel with it, first boiling it in two large zinc

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pails; but fortunately we should soon be practically independent of water, for the sama were now as large as eggs.

The sandy wastes now began to be interspersed with patches of hard stony ground; but all alike was green with various grasses and bushes—the latter always more or less thorny. The sama vines became more frequent, but were not yet plentiful enough, or large enough for us to trust altogether to them, so we made tracks straight north for Bakaris, a pan in which Kert said we should be sure to find plenty of water, as it always lasted three months after heavy rains. But when we got there, days later, we found nothing

VIEW ON THE DESERT NEAR KUIS.

but a sand-hole. The gems-bok, with the help probably of the wilde-beest had stirred it up most beautifully—from the clay-puddler's point of view, but that was not ours. Kert wanted us to camp here for two days and hunt, as the game must be plentiful close by; and so, to judge by the tracks all round the pan, they must be; but the water was not "delicious" enough for me, and we left the same evening for Kuis, about half-way between Mier and Kuruman, and the only place in the desert where there is a fresh-water well.

As we advanced we found the grass and sama growing rapidly, showing that there must have been

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heavy rains recently. We gathered some of the largest sama, and cooked them. They tasted to me very much like vegetable-marrow, which they closely resembled in appearance; and, seeing how popular pumpkins and squashes are in America, it struck me as strange that no one had ever thought of taking some of the seeds and trying them in the sandy wastes of the States. I determined to get some of the seeds when ripe and try them.

In two days we reached Kuis—a collection of Kalahari huts, standing on a patch of limestone close to the banks of the dry bed of the River Kuis, in the centre of which is the well, with some large camel-trees growing on both sides.

We had scarcely arrived when the waggon was surrounded by a number of men begging for tobacco and coffee. I thought I should easily get rid of them by saying I had none; but they checkmated me by asking for anything and everything that they saw, and then I had to meet them with a downright "No." Then we had peace for a time; but in the afternoon the chief of the place came—Makgoe by name, which, being interpreted, means, "Be quick," and quite a wealthy man in his way, having cattle, sheep, and horses. He was accompanied by a white man—an Englishman—who, after the preliminary greetings, said his name was Cann, and that he was a trader and hunter who had been thirty years in the country.

Cann kindly acted as interpreter, and to the first remark made by Makgoe—to the effect that the old chief wanted me to give him a rifle as a present—he was good enough to add the advice, "Give him nothing. The old scoundrel would let you starve before helping you."

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The chief had brought with him a fine-looking horse—the very thing I wanted—so I paid him out in his own coin, by replying to his question with another of similar import: "Will you make me a present of your horse?"

Makgoe shrugged his shoulders, and replied, "You must give me ten oxen in exchange for my horse."

I then tried argument, explaining that in my country, when a stranger came, we took care of him, and made him presents, and then, when he went away, he made us presents in return. Would Makgoe help me while I passed through his country? But he had evidently been taught that "when you go to Rome you must not do as Rome does," for he quickly replied,—

"That may be your custom; but you are in my country, and my custom is for everybody who passes through to pay me."

I replied by carelessly taking up a repeater and firing at a white crow, which I luckily knocked over, and then fired it again instantly after. His curiosity was excited, and he wanted to know what kind of a gun that was. When it was explained that sixteen shots could be fired from it without reloading, he deliberately said that he must have it as a present, he would take nothing else. Now, that was just what I wanted him to do, for I could hoist him with his own petard.

"You must give me fifteen oxen in exchange for my rifle," I said; "or, if you like, you shall have it for the horse and a cow. If not, I cannot give it you till I come back from hunting in the desert."

Then, giving him a plug of tobacco, I told him the talk was ended.

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He went, but the trader stayed to talk. "You treated the old nigger quite right," he said; "he always tries to bleed us, but we never give him anything more than a little tobacco and coffee. You need have no fear of him, as he has no following." And then he went on to tell me that he was on his way from Damaraland to the colony, after a fifteen months' journey. He had not collected many feathers and skins: it was the old story, the war between the Damaras and Namaquas had stopped all hunting for the last three years; but he had a lot of Damara cattle—nice little beasts, of medium size, and well shaped; some were nearly white, with black spots, but most of them were speckled either white and black, or white and brown, and all had very long horns, turning up at right angles to the forehead.

He had had some difficulty in getting through with the cattle, having had to fight twice to save himself from being robbed. As it was he had lost twenty head.

"But that is nothing," he added. "I have had lots of worse adventures than that in my time, among both men and beasts. Twice I have lost everything I possessed for want of water, being forced to leave my waggons in the sand, with all my goods and all my teams, and only escaping death from thirst myself by a miracle."

"You must know the country pretty well, after thirty years of it," I said. "I should be thankful for any hints you can give me."

"Yes, I think I know most of the tribes hereabout. I have been up as far as latitude 12°, visiting every tribe east and west, both going and returning. And a rum lot they are. The only people to be trusted

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at all are the Bushmen. If a Bushman once gets to know you, and you trust him well, he will stick to you through thick and thin. But the Hottentots are a lot of born thieves. They live by stealing cattle from their neighbours, and are not content with that, for they carry the women—and sometimes men, too, for the matter of that—into slavery, and treat them worse than dogs: in fact, they call their slaves 'dogs.'

"The Damaras are jet-black, not like the Hottentots, who are a kind of copper-red colour."

And he went on to give me a lot of hints as to the country, how to treat the natives, what districts to avoid, where to find game, and so on. In fact, from this half-hour's talk I gathered more useful information about the country than I had read in all the published books put together.

By Cann's advice I engaged a Bushman whom he recommended as a guide, and two Bastards who wanted to join in a hunting expedition, Dirk and Klas by name: two little coffee-coloured specimens of humanity, with ferret-like eyes, long crinkly hair, and a meagre moustache; both sharp, shrewd hunters, but lazy and cowardly to the last degree. They had two horses and a waggon with a team of fourteen oxen, which I hired, giving them in addition half the skins and half the feathers of what we killed—the meat of course to be common property. The waggon was necessary to store our skins and hides in, and to carry a sufficient supply of water and meal along with us, as we might get plenty of game in one place and then go for days without seeing any; and the same with water. The men were old hunters, and foretold plenty of hunting, for, although the long drought had driven the game away, the reports were that after the recent

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DIRK AND KLAS.

Page 150.

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rains there was plenty of sama, and the game was coming back in abundance, while the Bushmen, who had left their usual haunts to follow the game, had not returned to disturb them. The only things the Bastards were afraid of were lions, and they wanted me to pay for any cattle or horses that might get killed, but this I declined to do.

That night Cann came back to say that old Makgoe was hankering after the repeating rifle, and asked if he should negotiate matters for me. Seeing no reason to the contrary, I assented, and next morning found him waiting for me with the horse and two cows—and a six-months-old calf thrown into the bargain—a compliment which I acknowledged by sending the chief a score of extra cartridges for the rifle.

Matters being thus satisfactorily arranged, we started, our cavalcade consisting of two waggons, each drawing twelve oxen, six spare beasts, two milch cows and calves, and four horses—not forgetting four dogs—and the attendant company of Lulu and myself, old Kert, Jan, the two Bastards, a Kaffir, six Bushmen and one Bushwoman, who insisted on following her husband, some of his children being in the veldt to the north. The country was of the same character as before, but the sama being now large enough for the cattle and horses to eat, we were not so anxious about finding water. In fact, we used the sama juice as a substitute for Adam's ale, for everything but coffee.

There are two ways of extracting the water from the sama: one to cut them in pieces and boil them, skimming off the solids and scum; the other—the real Bushman fashion—to dig a hole in the sand, and build a fire in it, and when the fire has been burning some time to cover the glowing embers with a layer of sand.

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As soon as this is thoroughly heated, the hot mass is pushed on one side, the sama piled in its place, and then buried beneath it, the whole heap being covered with a fresh layer of sand. Sometimes another fire is lighted on the top of this. In any case this "oven," with its contents, is left to cool down all night, and next morning the sama are taken out and eaten. The taste is not so insipid as one would think, especially if eaten with a little suet—or, better still, *à la* Devonshire, with cream; but it suited me better to have the roasted sama squeezed into a pail of water, and, leaving it to cool, to drink it mixed with milk, which makes quite a refreshing beverage; in any case the sama, whether eaten as a solid or a liquid, quenches the thirst better than water.

But beware of the bitter sama! Every now and then you will find a small fruit, exactly resembling the others in everything but the taste, which is so bitter that a couple of the smallest will spoil a whole pail-ful of water. One morning the water was very bitter—undrinkable, in fact, by us—but the Bushmen drank it with a relish. This happened once or twice, and then I found out that these epicures, when they began to eat a bitter sama, put it carefully aside in order to be squeezed into the pail, so that they might get coffee for breakfast! After that I had every sama tasted before it was squeezed, so that "accident" could not be urged in extenuation.

On this oleaginous seed the Bushmen, who live almost entirely on the sama in seasons of plenty, get as fat as pigs, not taking the trouble to hunt when they can find food at their feet.

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CHAPTER X.

Lions' spoor—Kert astonishes the natives—Making a night kraal—A novel manger—A grass-covered "desert"—Collecting grass-seeds—A herd of gems-bok attacked by lions—Dirk and Klas run away—In pursuit of Leo—A narrow escape—We find the lion impaled on the gems-bok's horns—Skinning our booty—A lonely night-watch—A strange intruder—I am called on a mysterious errand.

Game now became plentiful, especially gems-bok, which we saw oftener than anything else; and so we kept the larder well supplied. We now and then came across a lion's spoor, and so had to take extra precautions, tying all the animals together at night, but no longer fastening the chain to the waggon, which would be sure to be upset in case of a stampede.

One day, just as we had unharnessed for the night, a Bushman came up to the waggon saying he belonged to a party out hunting for gems-bok, who were camped not a very great distance away. He recognized Kert, who wanted me to let him guide us to their camp that night. But Dirk said "No; we know the veldt better than he, and it will not do to go further to-night. Besides, I know these people, and if they have been hunting so long the game will be wild. We had better go by ourselves." So we stayed where we were that night, and next morning moved on in an opposite direction, presently falling in with a gang of Bastard hunters—old friends of Kert's, who gave them a long account of the sights he had seen in England. He had seen the

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Queen, he said, who had asked him for a lock of his hair, and made him captain over the Bastards, telling him to take great care of the people for her sake. Then he described the number of people in England as being beyond all calculation: as thick as the ants and grass-hoppers were on the veldt, to say nothing of the animals.

"What sort of house does the Queen live in?" asked one.

"Ah, you should see it! It has thirty-five windows one above the other; like thirty-five houses put one on the top of the other; and there are as many more under the ground."

"He! oh!" was the only remark his listeners made; but when he went on to say that there are no oxen, but "the horses and waggons are so thick that you can hardly cross the road," they gave vent to audible expressions of doubt, and I had to be appealed to, to verify these statements. This being done to their satisfaction, Kert continued,—

"You can walk for a day without seeing grass, nothing but stone roads and houses;" but he was pulled up short with a chorus of—

"Ha, Kert! we cannot believe that: how can all the horses live when the people outspan, if there is no grass?"

This was a poser, and Kert had to appeal to me; and when I explained that the horses had houses to sleep in, and that the grass was gathered a long way off and dried, and brought to them in their houses, they would hardly believe me.

"Houses for horses to live in and no grass?" one of them said inquiringly to Jan.

"Oh, yes; it's so," said Jan.

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"Have you seen it?"

"Yes," he replied. "I have seen the same at the Diamond Fields, and at Cape Town, and I have seen cows which never go to the veldt, but live in houses which are cleaned and washed every day."

"The English must be fond of work to do this," was the philosophical reply. "Our way is much better; we can sit and drink coffee and smoke while the cattle feed themselves."

Kert then described how he had been to a circus, saying, "All the animals talk in England, and are taught to do all kinds of things like people. The Englishmen have lions in waggons, and go in amongst them and play with them, and the lions never kill them, but are afraid of them."

This they utterly refused to believe, even when Jan put in his spoke in support of Kert, and when, on appeal, I corroborated the statement. Their experience of lions was so completely at variance with this that they could not believe such a thing.

That night they took the most elaborate precautions against their most dreaded foe. The two waggons were drawn close together, with just room for the four horses to stand between; the oxen were fastened to their *trek tow* (drawing-chain) in front of each waggon, and arranged in the form of a triangle, the milk cows and calves being tied to the fore-wheels. Then round all a circle of noi-bushes was made, and the unoccupied space inside cleared of grass, so that the men could place their skins out to lie down on. A fire was lighted in front of the oxen, and two hours after dark the whole party went out about fifty yards and made a circle of fires round the camp. These fires, however, were not kept up all night, the idea being that the

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smell of the newly-burned wood and grass would be enough to keep the lions away.

To feed the horses a "manger" was made on the sand, consisting of a layer of grass a few inches thick, on which some sama were piled, and then beaten with sticks. This new fodder "Lady" refused to eat, but the natives taught her to take to it by giving her some wild cucumbers—a short, thick, prickly thing looking like a huge caterpillar, but tasting just like our garden cucumber—and in an hour she was eating sama as though "to the manner born."

When all was settled for the night I had a look round, to see that all was secure. It was a strange sight to see the waggons and the long-horned cattle huddled up close together alongside, half lighted by the fitful glare of the fire, around which flitted, like a black spectre, the figure of a naked Bushman, while others either lay or sat near by, singing a wild, weird savage song, or telling stories of adventure. Kert was evidently the hero of the evening, and never tired of relating the many things he had seen and done and heard, besides many that had never happened save in his fertile imagination. His early training in the use of the bow and arrow had evidently not been without its effect, for surely no traveller ever yet drew the long-bow more skilfully than he. But even his tongue had need of rest, and after a time all was quiet, two watchers being appointed to make up the fire and keep a general look-out for intruders.

About 2 a.m. I was awakened by the barking of the jackals, and crept softly out to see how things were. The fires were all out and the watches asleep. A large half-bred greyhound called "Prick-up" followed me as I cautiously descended and made a tour of the

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camp. Not a soul stirring, not a sound save for the yaffing of the jackals outside. I made a complete circuit of the camp without disturbing man or beast; not even the other dogs heard us. A lion could have stolen in and grabbed a horse or a man as easily as if all their elaborate precautions had been left unmade. Fortunately, however, Leo kept his distance that night, and as I did not believe in the stories of lions attacking a large camp like ours, I refrained from disturbing the dreams of the sleeping blacks until an hour before daylight, when the cattle were unloosed and a man told off to watch them. At daylight the horses were set free, and the coffee was made. An hour after the sun was up, we inspanned and rode until eleven, when we halted for three hours. Our usual order of march was for the two Bastards to ride ahead to find sama and look for game, and select likely spots for camping; and just as we were inspanning they came back to say they had found a large patch of sama and close by a troop of gems-bok, one of which they had killed; so two of the Bushmen were sent on ahead to skin and dress the animal and bring it up to where we should pass. When we arrived they had already eaten all the entrails! and were cooking the feet. We were as pleased as they to have a dinner of fresh meat, and the rest of the day was spent in cooking our dinner, drying what meat was left, cutting bushes for the skerm, gathering and "brewing" sama, and performing the hundred and one little offices attending a night's camp on the veldt. That night the sama was particularly sweet, and the Bushmen, who always made it their duty to collect the fruit, had quite a feast till their stomachs were stretched to the last degree, and it seemed as if another mouthful would burst the skin.

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For the next week or so things went on quietly after the same fashion as the last few days. But suddenly the scene changed.

The riders came back and reported no sama to the north, and only a little to the west; the next day we should come to hard ground, and, from the distance judged by them, it would take the waggons three days to cross it. The question was whether it was better to go on, running the risk of finding neither sama, food, nor grass, or to strike off to the east; and, after hearing what they had to say, I made up my mind to ride with them across the hard ground, sleep there, and return next day. Our lives, and those of the cattle, depended upon knowing exactly how matters stood. So early next morning I had "Lady" saddled, and rode off. Hour after hour we passed through the same monotonous stretch of interminable grass, grass, grass, with here and there a noi bush, or a whithaat boom. How could the Kalahari ever have been called a desert, with so much vegetation, such countless acres of grass, reaching now nearly to the horses' backs?

The man who styled this country a "desert" must have worn spectacles that enabled him to see only the sand-hills—and them in an unnaturally bare state—and to overlook the grass. Or was it the old story of—

> Geographers on Afric's maps
> With savage pictures fill their gaps;
> And o'er unhabitable downs
> Place elephants for want of towns?

Every now and then we would ride up the highest sand-hills, with the double object of surprising any game that might be in the hollow on the other side,

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and of surveying the country; look where we would there was no end to the expanse of grass. It seemed a shame that so many people were on the verge of starvation in over-crowded cities, while all this vast flesh-producing tract should lie waste. Even when there had been no rain for a year the grass was equal to ordinary hay, while in dry seasons the sama remained good for a year. Then it struck me that grasses which would grow in an arid sand land like this might prove useful in other countries—in America and in Europe. The Prussians would be glad of such a grass, thriving on fine sand, with perhaps only one or two rains in a year. Change of climate might affect its growth; but it would be worth while to collect some seeds, and take them back with us to England; so, dismounting in a hollow, beneath the shade of a small tree, we unsaddled the horses, and knee-haltered them, and Dirk and Klas lay down to rest while I wandered about collecting the ripe seeds. While doing so I dug the sand away to see how deep the roots penetrated, and was surprised to find it quite moist eight or nine inches from the surface. True, the recent rains had been heavy; but then I remembered hearing of some half-breeds in the southern part of the desert who had found water, fresh, as well as brackish, by digging. In the hands of an energetic white race this country could surely be made one of the most productive grazing-lands in the world. The long droughts are the only drawback; but the grass here will keep green for a long time without water, so that a drought here is not so bad as an Australian drought. In any case, it could be provided against by storing the surplus water of the rainy season. There are no rivers to carry off the heavy rainfall,

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and the water must soak through to the limestone substratum; and wells to find the water, windmills to pump it, and reservoirs to store it, would completely alter the character of the country; but without this the land might as well be, in stern reality, what it is called—a "desert."

My musings were suddenly cut short by the sight of a herd of gems-bok grazing a short distance off, at the foot of a sand-dune, and with their heads turned towards us. Creeping on my hands and knees I found my men fast asleep, and, quietly waking them, pointed towards the game. We were dead to leeward of them, and as they would gradually draw closer towards us if undisturbed, we decided to await their approach. Watching in enforced silence, and without stirring a limb, it was an age before they came into range. It seemed as if they would never come near enough. While we lay admiring their handsome forms, with their long, sharp-pointed horns, and ashy-grey skins, and speculating on which of them would fall to our guns, they suddenly paused; up went their heads, and out flew their long black tails, no longer brushing off the pestilent flies from their sides, but held rigidly out astern. They must have seen or heard us. Yet we were at least 250 yards away. Could it be our horses, which were grazing a little to their left, that had alarmed them?

"No!" whispered one of the Bastards, "the horses won't frighten them."

It surely cannot be that long line of eland that has suddenly come into sight behind them? Quick as lightning the answer came from an unexpected quarter. With a single spring a lion bounded from behind a bush, and landed on the head of one of the

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herd. The rest, instead of breaking, and fleeing towards us, as we expected, formed a half circle, and charged the enemy. We could distinctly hear the rattling of their antlers. The grass was high, so we could not see distinctly; but, taking advantage of the confusion, crept rapidly closer, till, behind the friendly shelter of a bush, I gave the word to stand up and fire. Counting only four shots from all the others, while I had fired six, I looked round to see why they had all stopped, and found that not only had they sounded the order "cease firing," but that they had beaten a retreat, and were already fifty or sixty yards distant, running over a sand-hill as though the devil himself was in pursuit. "It must be the lion, not the devil," I thought, though I could see no sign of his tawny majesty. Turning to see if the horses were safe I found them, too, in full stampede up the hill to the right. Perhaps, after all, I was misjudging my faithful followers; and, instead of fleeing from the lion, they were in pursuit of the horses. Anyway, it was no use staying here, the gems-bok had all vanished; those that had fallen, concealed by the long grass, and the others by this time borne on the wings (or legs) of fear far out of sight. So I followed my runaways as far as the top of the hill, where a better view of the surroundings could be got. The Bastards, with the horses, were half a mile away on the other side of it. I beckoned them to come to me, and they beckoned me to go to them. For a time this signalling was without result; indeed, instead of coming towards me they steadily widened the gap that separated us, so that at last I had to give way and run, in order to catch them up. At last I reached them, out of breath and out of temper. No, not out of temper, I was in

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full temper, the full benefit of which those cowardly Bastards received, in my most forcible Afrikander Dutch. They explained that they saw the horses in full stampede, going along at a good pace, their halters being very loosely fastened to the knee, and two lions in pursuit; so they had run after the horses to save them.

"Well, the lions are frightened off by this time, so go and fetch the saddles, so that we can get in our game."

"To-morrow, boss, not now. If we go, die leeouw vill oonser paarde fret." ("The lions will eat our horses.")

"Then take the horses to the top of yonder koppje. Leave them there, and we will all go together and fetch the saddles."

To this they assented, but so reluctantly that I was sure they would back out of it if they could; so, keeping Dirk with me, and making him carry Klas's gun, so as to ensure both of them keeping to their word, I went slowly along the ridge of sand, in the direction of the spot where the saddles lay, keeping a good look-out for the supposed lions. Dirk tried to dissuade me from going after lions, game, saddles, or anything; but while he was spending his eloquence in vain, Klas rejoined us, and we all proceeded to recover the saddles, which we secured without adventure. But nothing would induce them to go any further. They argued that we could get our gems-bok to-morrow; that the lions would only eat the inside, and would leave the skins unhurt; that they would be prowling around, keeping an eye on their prey; and, though postponing their own dinner till after sundown, would take good care that nobody else forestalled them.

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"He is a skellum lion, and the sieur must not go. The lion is bad-tempered, and will fight; for he would not have attacked the gems-bok if he had not been disturbed in his afternoon sleep."

But I was obdurate. "If you won't go, then I will." Relieving Klas, as the greater coward of the two, of his rifle, I worked my way slowly down the slope to the hollow where the gems-bok lay, carefully examining every bush and bunch of grass likely to conceal a lion. Just as I got to the bottom of the sand-dune I heard something moving behind me. Quick as thought I turned, dropping one rifle and bringing the other to the shoulder. There was nothing to be seen; but I fancied I heard a rustling in a tuft of grass a few yards in front, and in another moment should have fired, when there came the words, "Skit nie! ek es Dirk!" ("Don't shoot! it is Dirk!") He had followed me, unnoticed, so far, and when he saw me turn round with my rifle at my shoulder, had dropped out of sight, for fear, as he tremblingly explained, that I should shoot him!

"Well, Dirk, you've had a narrow escape. If you had not spoken, I should have fired; for, when I could not see you, I of course took you to be the lion. Another time you had better keep yourself in full view."

Shamed into following me surreptitiously, he now plucked up courage to accompany me openly. Just in front of us was a low sand-hill, on the further side of which grew a small tree. If we could get up that tree, we should be able to take a good view all around. Throwing up a handful of sand into the air, after the manner of the Bushmen, I found that the wind was blowing straight from us to the tree; so we had to move very stealthily, for we were evidently close to

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some animal. We could hear a slight struggling sound, and a noise as of hoofs kicking together, which it was not easy to explain. Surely the gems-bok was dead long before this; and, if so, the lion would be lying in ambush till dusk—at least, this was Dirk's theory.

"Never mind; follow me, and we will soon find out."

"Stay, sieur! It is a lioness, with her young ones. (Leeouwen wifey und kinders.) They are playing with the gems-bok's hoofs, and if you frighten them the lioness will attack you."

But this only excited my curiosity to a still higher pitch, and motioning him to follow, I stole silently on. As soon as we were within a few yards of the tree, Dirk rushed forward, and incontinently dropping his gun, scrambled up into the thick branches. Now, I thought, I'm in for it. There was a rushing sound in the grass as of some animal making straight for me. I could feel the perspiration oozing from every pore as, pulling myself together, I brought my gun to my shoulder and faced the sound. But nothing came. The soughing noise continued, but there was no movement to indicate its origin; so, sidling up to the tree, I stooped down and handed Dirk's rifle up to him, motioning him to look out and see what it was that was going on in front. Stooping to reach his gun, he tremblingly whispered the single word "Leeouw," and nothing more. So placing my gun within reach, against the trunk of the tree, I determined to climb up too. There, at twenty yards away, was a lion, his back towards me, apparently sucking away the life's blood from the neck of a gems-bok, whose feet were yet kicking spasmodically; while beneath the hind part of his body lay the neck of a second gems-bok,

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still, like his comrade, in the last agonies. A few yards further off lay a third deer, dead, but unmutilated; which convinced me that there was but the one lion to deal with. Taking careful aim at the back of his head, I fired one barrel, and without looking to see what effect the shot had taken, reloaded. Still he lay there, exactly in the same position. It was not possible that I could have missed him, and that he was so intent on his draught of blood that he disdained my petty thunders; but to make sure, I fired again. Still not a movement, save the renewed spasmodic struggles of the helpless gems-bok. Had I missed again, or killed at the first shot? I asked Dirk's opinion, which was summed up in these three words, "Ek wit nie" ("I don't know").

Leaving him in the tree, I clambered down, and cautiously approached the lion sideways, determining at the slightest movement to fire at his shoulder. Imagine my surprise to find one horn of the gems-bok sticking out of the lion's shoulder and the other through his neck, while just through his hip could be seen the tips of the horns of the other gems-bok. He had impaled himself on the horns of two of his prey, and, while rendering them helpless, had put himself *hors de combat*. He was as dead as a door-nail. Taking him by the tail, I tried to pull him off, but could not stir him, and, calling to Dirk to help, found that nimble youth at my side in an instant now that he saw there was no danger.

What a group this would have made for Lulu! I had half a mind to leave it till the waggons came up; but the jackals, hyenas, and vultures would come, and the skins would get mauled, and the meat we were so much in want of would go bad; so that while

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waiting for the chance of the "shadow," we should lose the substance; so, giving the unfortunate gems-bok a *coup de grâce*, we set to work to "bag" our game. The difficulty was to move the great carcases at all. We could not pull the lion's body off the horns, nor could we drag the gems-bok from beneath the lion. Dirk proposed to cut the lion open down the back, and quarter him, but this would spoil his skin; so, sending him to fetch Klas and the horses, I marked out the following plan of operations: to skin the hinder part of the lion as he lay, as we could pull his legs out far enough to rip the skin up inside, and then take away the hind quarters. This enabled us to remove the entrails, and then it was an easy job to cut the skin along the belly to the forelegs, which were soon skinned and cut off.

In the course of these operations I found that one horn of the gems-bok had pierced his heart almost through the centre, so that he must have died immediately, but not before he had torn the neck and shoulders of his prey completely to pieces.

Having got rid of the strange link that had united the two gems-bok in their death, I made them fast to the horses' tails—a trick I had learnt last autumn in Arkansas—and so hauled first one and then the other out of the thick grass to the top of the hill, where there were some noi bushes and stunted trees with which to make a skerm and keep fires burning for a protection during the night. By the time this task was accomplished, and enough fuel gathered to keep two fires going all night, it was nearly dark, as the moon, then at its first quarter, did not give much light, and that little not for long.

Dirk and Klas were soon asleep; but the excite-

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ment of the last few hours, which had tired them out, had driven sleep altogether from my eyelids, and I was not sorry to let them have their rest first. If they slept off their fatigue during the early watch, they would be more likely to keep awake for the second watch, when I should be more ready for a doze myself. And so they slept the sleep of the just. There was no sign of fear on their faces as they lay snoring a duet, the sounds fortunately partly smothered by the spring-bok skins with which they always enveloped their heads when lying down to sleep. After remaking the fires, I looked at my watch, and was surprised to find it was past two o'clock. It did not seem midnight yet, and I rather questioned the accuracy of my watch; but as it had never told me a lie yet, and was ticking merrily away, I felt bound to believe it, and called Klas and Dirk to awake. I might as well have called "spirits from the vasty deep." Not till I rolled them over with my foot did they cease their stertorous music, and then they awoke in a flurry, snatching instinctively at their guns, which they always clasped under their right arm as they slept. They were somewhat unwilling to get up and take their turn at watching and fire-making, and argued that as the first part of the night was the most dangerous, there was no need for them to keep awake. It is astonishing how often carelessness and cowardice are united in the same person. I told them they had had their turn, and now it was mine; I should lie down to sleep, and if anything happened they were to call me; but if they failed in their duty, they must take the consequences.

It was broad daylight when Dirk came and whispered, "There is a man coming towards us."

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In an instant I levelled my glasses, not my gun, in the direction Dirk pointed to; and there, not a mile away, was a human form, apparently a boy, to judge by his height, and certainly a native, for he was naked: whether black or brown I could not clearly distinguish. He was apparently alone, and made no attempt at concealment, for he stopped every now and then to lay down his weapons—a bow and arrow, and stick,—and held out his hands, as if to say he was "a friend." As he drew nearer I stood up and motioned him to come to us; and then there emerged from the thick grass, which had sometimes entirely hidden him, the funniest-looking little fellow I had ever seen: perched on two thin legs was a big, round ball, for a stomach, and above that another round ball, much smaller, for a head, whose wrinkled face proclaimed him a man, and an old man too.

"Goen daag," I said, giving him my hand.

"Goen daag," he replied.

And then the conversation abruptly ended. He had evidently reached the extremest limit of his knowledge of Afrikander-Dutch, for he went off into a series of clicks and chirrups, of which none of us could make head or tail. Dirk and Klas tried him with Koranna and Hottentot, but he understood them no better than he did me, or we him. Then he had recourse to pantomime. Pointing over towards the koppje, he made signs for me to go with him; then he lay down, and pretended to be unable to get up again. It was clear that somebody was ill, and that he wanted assistance. At the words "man ziek" ("man sick"), his eyes glistened, and he nodded his head eagerly, repeating the words several times; then, placing his fingers on my hand, he gave a grunt, followed by a shake of the head,

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as he touched his own hand. Evidently it was a white man who was ill and lying on the ground, unable to walk. When I made signs that I would come, the little old man made the utmost demonstrations of delight and of impatience for me to return with him at once. Giving orders to Dirk and Klas to skin and cut up the gems-bok, I filled my canteen with water and my "pocket-pistol" with brandy, saddled Lady Anna, and mounted. They tried to dissuade me from going, suggesting that the little ape-like man only wanted to lead me into an ambush; but, to their credit, I must add, offering to go with me. In this they were, perhaps, as much influenced by the fear of being left by themselves as of anything that might happen to me; but I put away their suspicions, pointing out that the waggons could not be very far off, and adding that one of them might, if he liked, ride back to meet them, and bring them up without delay. I confess that, with a full recollection of the fate of Mr. Harris, a trader who had been murdered by the Bushmen some time previously at Kang Pan, I had some slight misgivings myself; but it would not do to show any hesitation before my men; besides, the little dwarf seemed so earnest, and his actions all so natural, that I felt sure no treachery was intended. On the way I let Lady Anna stop every now and then to get a mouthful of grass and an occasional sama. The poor beast was thirsty, having had nothing to drink since the day before; and it was wise, on my own account, to keep her as fresh as possible, in case of necessity. At every pause my guide looked round, beckoned me to come on quickly, and walked ahead, looking pleased each time as I trotted along and caught him up.

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CHAPTER XI.

Rescuing a dying man—The sick German tells his story—Treacherous Hottentots—Left to die on the desert—The everlasting sama—A wilderness of beautiful flowers—Spring-bok bewitched—Taking stock—A sea of grass—A night alarm—A visit from a party of Bechuana traders—A fantastical witch-doctor.

After going on about two hours in this way, the little man suddenly ran forward as hard as he could down a dune, and disappeared behind a noi-bush. I paused a moment to reconnoitre, but quickly espied the pigmy leaning over a man who lay curled up in a little space in the centre of the bush. By this time I was off my horse: the little fellow then stuck his head through a hole in the bush, and motioned me to enter that way. I tried to do so, on my hands and knees; but the wait-a-bit thorns disputed my progress, and I was forced to wriggle through, snake-like, on my stomach. There lay a big, raw-boned white man, with pale cheeks, looking all the paler for the brown eyes that were sunken deeply into his head. Every bone stood out prominently in his gaunt frame: his parched lips told of fever, but his low pulse showed that a stimulant was needed; so, holding up his head, I poured a little brandy-and-water into his mouth. This revived him, and I could just hear him whisper,—

"Mutter! ich bin sehr durstig."

Poor fellow, in his delirium he was far away in his old German home, with his mother watching over him.

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He asked for water, which I gave him, a few drops at a time; and then suddenly he broke out with,—

'You black devils, you'll rob and murder me! No you won't! I'm for you all! I will kill you all! Take that, and that!" and then he raised his arms, as if in the action of shooting, and fell back exhausted.

I then prepared a dose of quinine, which I always carried in my pocket-book, and presently gave it to him, and sat by his side, while, in obedience to my signals, the little man went to graze my mare. In about half an hour the sick man languidly opened his eyes and called, "Korap! Korap!"

"Was wollen Sie," I replied. He started at the words, stared hard at me, and tried to get up. "Ich bin ein Freund," I continued, gently raising him.

"How did you come here?" he asked, still speaking his own language.

"The little man fetched me. He has gone to look after my horse."

"Horse? Korap? Horse?"

"Yes, my horse is here. Korap"—for evidently that was the name of the attendant dwarf—"is feeding it. My waggon is not far off, and if we can get you there, you will soon be all right."

"But who are you, and what are you doing so far out in the desert?"

"I will tell you everything by-and-by; but you must keep quiet just now. Take this," holding to his lips some quinine, which he drank, and then quietly lay back quite contentedly. "I will be back presently," I added, going out to fetch my blanket, which was strapped to my saddle. At the call, "Korap! Korap!" the pigmy quickly came to me; and after covering up the sick man, I made signs that I would

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ride back to my camp to get more water, and return soon. There would be no danger of his being disturbed by animals in that thick bush, where he had evidently lain some days already. It seemed, indeed, as if the noi-bush was made for the purpose of protection against wild beasts. Nothing will ever attempt to get through it, and the bushmen have only to creep into a clump of trees, cut out the centre, and sleep in perfect security against any purported enemy.

It did not take long to return to the camping-place of the previous night. My men had sighted the waggon, and Dirk had ridden off to meet it, leaving Klas to cook some of the steaks into which the gemsbok had already been cut, and which were hanging out to dry. I was ravenously hungry, and steak after steak disappeared, washed down with a drink of sama-water. Presently, "There comes the waggon!" cried Klas, pointing in the direction in which the sick German lay. This was fortunate; so quickly mounting the mare, I rode off again, catching sight every now and then of the top of the waggon as, like a ship in a heavy sea mounting a wave, it rose on the top of a sand-dune, to be lost to view directly after as it rolled down the opposite slope.

A few moments sufficed for explanations, and Lulu, after looking out a tin of soup and a bottle of laudanum, rode off to the hospital-bush, whither the drivers were to follow as quickly as they could. By the time the waggon came up, we had cut down the noi-bush and carried the sick man out. He was in a terrible plight: his hands and arms scratched and torn with the sharp thorns; his hair matted together with blood; his clothes in such rags that they fell to pieces as we lifted him. Korap looked on all the while

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with just a glimmer of satisfaction lighting up his stoical face. Carefully we laid our patient in the waggon, and after a few spoonsful of soup, gave him a dose of laudanum, which would prevent his feeling the jolting of the waggon; then drove carefully towards the place where Dirk and Klas were left.

It was a busy scene that was enacted during the next three hours, before darkness set in, on that sand-dune in the middle of the Kalahari Desert. All hands were occupied—some enlarging the laager; others skinning and cutting into strips the second gems-bok; others making fires and cooking; and every now and then watching for our patient to awake. For him we prepared some Liebig's extract of meat, with a little rice, which he presently ate like the starved man he was. He wanted more, but he did not get it; for we gave him another dose of laudanum instead, thirty drops this time, which kept him sound asleep all night.

Early next morning he awoke, evidently much better. The fever had quite left him, and the only thing to do was to help him to recover his strength. We had a hammock swung up, and lifted him into it, giving him for breakfast some porridge cooked in sama-water, a little bit of meat, and some boiled milk and coffee; and with similar treatment he was able in three days to sit up and tell us his story—which I will translate instead of inflicting on my readers a long speech in a mixture of German and broken English.

"My name is Fritz L——, a German by birth. For the last seven years I have been in South Africa as a *smous* (trader). My last journey was up into Damaraland, trading powder and guns, knives, beads, coloured cloths, coffee, and other things; and I had

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done well, mostly taking oxen in exchange, as during the last few years the war between the Damaras and the Namaqua Hottentots had been unceasing, and few skins or feathers had been hunted for. I was returning home with 200 oxen, besides my team, and a few skins and feathers, and by dint of hard riding had managed to escape the Namaquas and reach the Kalahari; and when I had got on to the desert all danger seemed past, so I was not so watchful as I had been. I had ten men with me, Hottentots, who seemed quite as anxious as I was to get out of the country; but one night Korap, the little dwarf there, came to wake me, and pretending to fight, said, 'Hodnots! Hodnots!' ('Hottentots!'), motioning me to come out quickly. I at once understood that there was danger, and jumped up, gun in hand, and called my people, but they were nowhere to be seen. Then I saw there was treachery.

"Calling out that I would shoot if the men did not come at once, I ran to the front of the waggon, and saw that some of the men were driving away the oxen, while others were cutting the *reims*. I fired at one of them, but after that I knew nothing more. Somebody from behind struck me a blow on the head, which stunned me, and when I recovered my senses, I found myself lying on the ground, with little Korap by my side, as still and mute as a stone. I could not make it out; it seemed so strange for me to be lying on the ground like that. When he saw me open my eyes, Korap broke silence by exclaiming, 'Hodnots, vaar!' ('Hottentots, waggon!'), and pointed out over the desert. Then I tried to get up, but found my head was sore; and suddenly the scene of the night before came back to me. I struggled to my feet, but nearly fell with giddiness, and putting my hand to

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my neck, while the other rested on little Korap, I found my hair all matted with blood. After a time I managed to look around, and found everything gone clean away except my skin blanket and tin cup and a dead Hottentot. He must have been the man I shot, and the black devils had evidently left both of us for dead. To follow the waggon was useless; in fact, it meant certain death; and I could get no redress. No Government would take up my case, for traders in this lawless district have to take their chance. Here I was left stranded in the desert, without food or shelter, or the means of obtaining either, hundreds of miles away from anywhere; out of reach of water, and without even a sama growing near. Only yesterday I was well-to-do, and to-day ruined and half murdered. Why had they not killed me outright? anything would be better than to die a maddening death from thirst!

"Presently, however, with the cooler air of the evening, I felt stronger, and the hope of life became greater. Little Korap was safe and well, and would be able to find some kind of food even in the desert; and I resolved to try and get back to Quang, on the dry bed of the Little Nosob River. I knew my way about pretty well, and by going in that direction I might manage to intercept another trader, named Cann, who was to leave Damaraland about a week or ten days after me. This, too, would take me into the sama strip; so, motioning to Korap the direction in which we were to go, I at once walked on a little way.

"The worst of it was Korap could not understand a word of Dutch, and I did not know his language, although he had been with me two years. I bought him from the Ovampos, while up there on a trading trip, giving a silk handkerchief and a handful of beads

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for him. The Ovampos told me that a tribe of these dwarfs, called "Kara Kara," lived in a tract of country of the same name, lying to the north, and that Korap and a girl of about fifteen years of age were the only ones left out of a number they had taken prisoners during a raid a short time before. I took pity on the little fellow, and took him out of his horrid slavery among the Ovampos, who treated him worse than a dog; and but for him I should now be food for vultures or hyenas.

"After walking a short distance, we came just before dark to a thick noi-bush, from which we managed to clear out a space just large enough to lie down. The brush that we cleared out we piled up overhead, and dragged another bunch of it after us as we crept inside, so as to block up the entrance. In this way we were protected from the attacks of wild beasts at night. Several times I saw a lion prowling round outside, and in the morning could see the track, as they had gone round and round looking for a way in; but they never attempted to force their way through the prickly bush. On the morning after our first night in the bush we found a few sama, which we ate raw, and that was all we had that day till the evening, when Korap found a root called ki-ki, and some cocoons, with the chrysalis inside, which we ate. We managed to collect enough dry brushwood to make a small fire, in the hot ashes of which he placed the sticks, with the cocoons on them, for about a minute, and then taking out the chrysalis, offered it to me to eat. I could not stomach them, so he had the first lot all to himself; but next day I tried one, and found it so good that I wanted more, and always ate them whenever they were found."

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"But did you not get any other meat? There could not be much support in such food as that!"

"No; we should soon have starved, if Korap had not twice managed to catch a number of little animals that burrowed like rabbits in the ground, which Korap called katteah. They were not much bigger than rats, but were delicious eating. We had no gun; and when these little animals failed Korap made a bow and some poisoned arrows, hoping to kill some steinbok. The poison he made out of spiders, and gum which he collected from a small root; but, when he came to shoot, the bow-string, which was made of grass, broke, and Korap could not get any strong enough to bear the strain. So we were reduced to living on roots, with an occasional sama; and whether it was from eating so much of this kind of food, or whether it was from catching cold at night, I don't know, but I had a bad attack of dysentery, which made me dreadfully weak. We managed, however, to crawl to the river, when I was disappointed to find the fresh track of a trader's waggon going south, and I knew that Cann had passed. I was too weak to follow him up, and the only thing to do was to try and reach Lihutitung, where there is water, and where Mapaar, the chief of the Bakalahari, lives. The rest you know; and I can only thank you and little Korap yonder for saving my life between you."

"But you were much too far south to reach Lihutitung. We are a long way from there now."

"Well, for once it was lucky for me that I missed my way and fell ill. Had I not, you would not have picked me up; so that I look upon my last attack of fever as a God-send. But now I am here, the only

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thing I can do is to get well and help you, unless I am in the way."

He at first seemed to gain strength very slowly, but with a daily dose of Hop Bitters he picked up rapidly, and gave us the advantage of his experience and help with the greatest cheerfulness. As he gained strength he made himself very useful, and was in more ways than one a valuable acquisition to our party. A powerfully-built man, standing six feet one in his stockings, broad-shouldered, and with muscular arms and hands, he reminded me of the picture of the Village Blacksmith, as he rolled up his sleeves before setting to work. He was never idle, and was never so happy as when doing something. He could cook well, thoroughly understood the natives, and had a smattering of the Hottentot tongue, as well as of Dutch and English; was fond of natural history, and had a taste for entomology; and when he found that we were travelling for pleasure and for the purpose of exploring the Kalahari, and making collections of its fauna and flora, and especially with the object of finding out if the country was fit for cattle-ranching on a large scale, and, if so, to acquire a tract of land for the purpose, he threw himself heartily into the project. His enthusiasm was particularly aroused when I explained that we also hoped to ascertain the truth about the reputed pigmies of Lake N'gami, one of whom we had apparently so unexpectedly found in the person of his little "slave." "Slave," did I say? Yes, slave! A human being, bought for a handkerchief and a handful of beads not worth a shilling! But that slave was happy, well fed, well cared for, and had greater liberty than thousands of "free and independent" dwellers in European

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cities. If the flag of England or any civilized power were carried forward to protect these "blacks" from themselves and their black oppressors, even if they were all made "slaves" of civilized white masters again to-morrow, what misery and bloodshed would be spared, and what wealth would be added to the sum of the world's prosperity!

Acting on Fritz's advice, we abandoned the idea of crossing the hard ground, and followed up the sama, now and then traversing a narrow strip of hard limestone formation. These limestone leaders, if followed up, would, said Dirk and Klas, lead to salt-pans, and possibly even to pans of fresh water, as there were indications, by the clouds and lightning-flashes in the distance, of a heavy rainfall to the east. But the risk was too great to run, although the prospect of getting a drink of fresh water and a bathe was a very great temptation. We were all getting tired of the everlasting flavour of sama. We ate the sama raw; we ate the sama fried; we drank the sama-water; we made our coffee with sama-water; we stewed our meat in sama-water, and altogether we were sick of the taste of the stuff. But our cattle throve on it, and if we went out of our way on the chance of water, we might fail to find the one and lose the other. Besides, we were not altogether waterless, for we still had two barrels full, which, with the resolute determination of Stoics, we religiously left untouched against the time when we might get into a district where there was no sama.

We tried every imaginable plan to keep the sama-water stored up in the empty water-barrels, but found that it invariably turned sour if kept over-night, and then its flavour was to us abominable. The natives,

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however, drank it; and we made up our minds the next time we came into a plentiful growth of sama, to store at least a barrelful of it for their use.

This was sooner than we expected, for next day we

A GROUP OF KALAHARI FLORA.

got into a dense growth of ripe sama. This was quite a disappointment, for the water from the ripe plant is not nearly so nice as that from the green; besides, the cattle cannot eat it so easily, the rind being quite hard,

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and filled with dark-brown seeds. When in this state the sama will lie for a year without decaying, provided there is no rain.

Here and there my attention was attracted by hundreds of magnificent lily-shaped flowers, perfectly white, growing in thick clusters of fifty or sixty on a single stem, each forming a most beautiful bouquet. I gathered a number of the finest blossoms, and then, sending for a shovel, dug up a good many of their large bulbs, which I grouped with the flowers, and got Lulu to take a photograph of the whole.

Presently one of the Bushmen called my attention to a great herd of spring-bok, which he said was bewitched. On our going over to them, the herd ran away, leaving behind about one hundred of their number, who seemed to have no fear of us, but remained near the same spot, running a short distance hither and thither, then springing into the air, and cutting the most ridiculous capers, staggering to and fro like drunken men, falling to the ground, giving a kick or two, and then lying stiff and stark-dead. I thought they must be suffering from some disease or from the attacks of some irritating insects; but Kert explained that they were poisoned by the beautiful lily-like flower which we had admired so much, and that he had seen hundreds of bok dead through eating it.

Suddenly it struck me that possibly it was this that had caused the attack of coma which so nearly proved fatal to me. The leaf, I now saw, was exactly like the ki-ki leaf which the natives eat, and in mistake for which I had evidently eaten some of this poisonous plant. The Bushmen called it *marbo*.

A little way further on the ripe sama became so thick that it was dangerous to let the horses go into

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it. They picked their way carefully through it for a time, but presently down went the two Bastards who were riding on a little way ahead. Their horses had slipped over the hard, round gourds; so, as it was getting dark, I determined to go no further that night, but to reconnoitre in the morning, and see which was the best way out of the sama patch, or whether we could safely steer straight for Lihutitung. So next morning Klas and Kert went out on horseback, and did not return till evening, having ridden fourteen hours. They reported that, finding no sama three hours ahead of us, they had ridden on till they came to a waggon-spoor leading to Mapaar's town, which they could just see from the top of a high koppje. We did not start till nearly noon the next day, so as to give the animals a good rest and a good feed; and to keep them going the rest of the journey to Mapaar's town, which we calculated it would take us three days to reach, we filled the buck-waggon up with sama. I also took the opportunity of the long halt to overhaul the contents of our waggon. Our patient was by this time getting quite strong again; he had picked up wonderfully quick; so I made him foreman of the waggon, much to Kert's disgust; but the old guide had no knowledge of the country we were passing through, and had lost all control of the two Bastards, owing partly to his dependence on them, and still more to his familiarity with them. He persisted, however, in giving them orders, which they as persistently despised; and his authority had dwindled down to being boss of the Bushmen. I therefore handed everything over to Fritz, who started by taking stock of our possessions, the result being the following inventory:—

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2 waggons.
2 screw-jack.
50 oxen.
2 cows.
2 calves.
4 horses.
4 dogs.
12 ox-yokes.
2 trek chains.
40 straps for oxen.
40 yoke stay straps.
37 rifles.
1 shot-gun.
15,000 brass cartridges for American guns.
1200 ditto for Martini ditto.
10 lbs. Curtis and Harvey powder.
1 shot-gun case with all tools.
250 cartridges for shot-gun.
2 bags shot.
2 field-glasses.
12 awls.
6 canvas-needles.
24 pocket-knives.
12 large butcher ditto.
12 mouth-organs.
1 concertina.
12 brass tinder-boxes.
40 lbs assorted beads.
12 sheets.
15 blankets.
2 rubber rugs.
2 ditto coats.
4 cups and saucers, enamelled iron.
4 plates, ditto.
6 knives and forks.
18 spoons.
1 screw-hammer.
2 large tin pails.
2 small ditto.
1 pick.
1 shovel.
1 saucepan.
1 pot.
1 kettle.
1 frying-pan.
1 broiler.
1 axe.
1 large dish.
1 small ditto.
2 saddles.
2 bridles.
2 riding-whips.
2 saddle-bags.
2 wells for rifle.
6 oz. quinine.
8 oz. laudanum.
10 oz. sulphuric acid.
2 boxes Epsom salts.
1 bottle castor oil.
1 glass dropper.
Half-bottle sweet oil.
Half-bottle gun oil.
6 tin cups.
10 tin plates.
2 lbs. nails.
2 packets tacks.
2 balls twine.
10 lbs. soap.
2 ten-pound jars arsenic soap.
2 bowie-knives and belts.
1 revolver.
5 dozen eau-de-Cologne.
1 lantern.
8 lbs. candles.
2 cork-screws.
20 spring-bok skins.
1 jackal ditto.
1 stein-bok ditto.
1 gems-bok ditto.
4 eland ditto.
12 gems-bok tails.
1 lion's skin.
1 ostrich ditto.
2 lbs. feathers.
8 gems-bok horns and heads.
6 stein-bok ditto.
1 iguana skin.
6 snake ditto.
8 boxes of insects.
1 bottle vegetable poison.
115 packets seeds.
1 bag bulbs.
Half-bag cracked wheat.
Half-bag flour.
10 lbs. rice.

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4 tins oatmeal.
1 tin pepper.
1 tin salt.
1 bag ditto.
10 lbs. dried peaches.
6 bottles vinegar.
1 bottle brandy.
1 bottle ginger-brandy.
30 lbs. sugar.
Half-pound tea.
2 small bags, specimens of rock.
1 large sail, tent top.
2 whips.
8 bags.
10 bird-skins.
1 bundle, sample of different grasses.
1 basket.
2 bottles Worcester sauce.
6 seat cushions.
1 bag empty cartridges.
1 waterproof rug-cover on a strap.
2 hammocks.
1 auger.
1 hammer.
1 screw-driver.
2 dozen assorted bolts.
1 bucket waggon grease.
1 camera and lenses.
2 square boxes dry plates.
1 tripod.
6 towels.
13 yds. Turkey red.
2 dozen cotton handkerchiefs.
2 lengths rope.
4 leather bags.
8 planks for seats and beds.
4 pair velt scoons.
2 water-bags.
2 shoulder-straps for cartridges.
1 flat barrel of water.
1 quarter ditto.
1 large ditto.
1 chain for brake to waggon.
8 raw-hide straps.
2 valises.
1 toilet-bag.
2 heavy overcoats.
1 light ditto.
1 gimlet.
Thread and needles.
Pens and ink.
12 lead pencils.
1 bag cut tobacco.
12 lbs. plug Cavendish ditto.
3 dozen boxes matches.
100 pipes.
2 rolls Boer tobacco.
1 bag ditto.
1 bag gun-caps.
8 silk handkerchiefs.
1 case Hop Bitters.

Of all the live-stock, what gave us the greatest comfort was the two cows. If I had the journey to perform again I would take six cows at least, and strain the sama through them before drinking it.

The country gradually became more and more level. Its gentle undulations, only broken here and there by a distant *koppje* and covered with ripe grass, resembled the gently-swelling bosom of a golden ocean, the similitude being heightened as the ripe ears of the grasses, bowing before the breeze, flashed from their under-side a silvery light, like the moon-lit

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ripples of the sea. As daylight vanished, the wind, which blew from the south, increased in strength, and we were all—the Bushmen particularly—glad to draw up close to the fire, round which we were sitting re-telling and re-hearing the familiar stories of prowess in the hunting-field, when we were startled by the dogs setting up a furious barking. "Bull" rushed out, and was soon at close quarters with some unseen foe, for the night was cloudy and we could distinguish nothing. Guided, however, by the noise, Lulu, Fritz, and I, closely followed by little Korap, seized our guns and were making for the scene of combat, when we heard some one shouting "Kin nach heikong hoolah," which was translated into "Don't shoot, we are friends," by old Kert, who in reply asked how many they were and what they wanted. They said they were four Bechuanas, hunters and traders, with two trek-oxen, and that they had seen our fire and would like to come and camp near us. As the brief parley proceeded, Kert and one or two of the rest who had hitherto kept at a safe distance behind us, came forward, so I told Kert to offer the new arrivals a welcome, and calling "Bull" off, we all fell back as the latter advanced. The first distinct objects to emerge from the gloom were the heads of two oxen, with horns big enough for four, and then their bodies, laden with pots and kettles, skins and bags, an odd assortment of produce, raw and manufactured. Next came two stalwart Kaffirs, as black as ebony, the first sign of whose presence was the gleam of their white, ivory-like teeth, and the sparkle of their dark eyes, as the firelight fell upon them. The third man of the party was dressed like the others, in rough corduroy garments; but behind them came a copper-coloured

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individual most fantastically arrayed. Over his shoulders hung a large skin, which scarcely concealed the remnants of an old shirt, once probably white, but now almost the same colour as himself; on his head was an old felt, conical hat, on the apex of which was stuck a bunch of ostrich feathers, while from one side of it was suspended a woollen hanging bird's-nest. His arms and ankles were decorated with rows of bangles of iron and copper wire, to the jangling of which was added at every step the rattle of strings of dried cocoons suspended from the knees. On his neck were rows of many-coloured beads, with here and there clusters of lions' claws, hyenas' toe-nails, wolves' vertebræ, and prominent among all a bunch of three-cornered bones, ornamented with hieroglyphics, with a rude bone cross as a central pendant.

Each man carried a knobkerry in one hand and an assegai in the other; but they soon assured us of their friendly intentions by shaking hands all round with every member of our party, omitting only us three "white men," and then deliberately squatting on their hams, according to the custom of their country, as a sign that they wanted something to eat and to be friends. The only symptom of hostility was displayed on their side by one of two curs following at their heels, whose ear was torn and bleeding, and on our side by "Bull," who evidently was the author of the damage, and who eyed his quondam adversary as if he would like to finish him off then and there. Calling "Bull" to order, I had some food given to our visitors, and then commenced a long pow-wow between them and Kert. It was at least half an hour before Kert could tell me anything about them, for they ate and talked continuously, asking and answer-

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ing questions in quick succession. Meantime, the fourth man of the company was busy a short distance off outspanning the oxen and lighting a fire, and it was not till he returned that the others rose in solemn silence and marched off to their own quarters.

"Now, Kert, tell us all about them:" and the old fellow's eyes glistened as he congratulated us on our good fortune in falling in with the party. They were Kaffirs of the Bangweketsi country, to the east, who traded with the Bakalahari and Bushmen, hunting ostriches and jackals on the way. Jackals were their principal game, since their skins were much sought after by the chiefs, and a robe of them would sell in their country for a horse. These Kaffirs, he added, were generally rich, and we should be able to get from them anything we wanted, for they had coffee and tobacco, powder and lead, and other merchandise, which they would be anxious to exchange with us in the morning. "Above all," said Kert, "they will be able to tell us where to get game and sama, and where the little people are to be found."

"Ask him who the old rag-and-bone man is," said Lulu.

The individual thus irreverently alluded to turned out to be a *soenya;* in other words, a witch-doctor. "He will tell us whether our expedition will be successful," explained Kert, "whether the lions will attack our cattle"—in fact, to him was attributed the power of foretelling anything and everything.

Lulu suggested that we had better haul up the Stars and Stripes or the Union Jack, and "annex" the *soenya*, and then stick him up as a scare-crow outside our camp every night; but, if Lulu was disrespectful, Kert and Dirk made amends by the awe with

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which they evidently regarded the *soenya*, for they came and seriously advised me to go the first thing in the morning and consult this miracle-worker about my future movements. Foreseeing that I might be able to turn such an interview to advantage, though not perhaps in the way Kert and Dirk intended, I promised compliance, and spent the next half-hour with Lulu rehearsing the part I intended to play at the *séance* on the morrow. In the meanwhile I could hear Kert and the rest talking of the wonderful powers of the *soenya*—or *m'tagat*, as these impostors are called in the Zulu tongue—and even after all in the camp were supposed to be asleep, I could hear the natives solemnly recounting the instances which had come under their own notice, where the witch-doctors had performed wonderful cures, surpassing even those of Hop Bitters, and where their words, foretelling good and evil alike, had come true.

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CHAPTER XII.

The witch-doctor's *séance*—The oracle prophesies good luck—Turning the tables on the conjurer—Nonplussing the nigger—On the borders of the K'gung Forest—A remarkable bird's-nest—A terrible disappointment—Making the best of it—Digging for water—A deserted Balala camp—A lion springs into our camp—How the natives make leather—Native water-bearers—At Lihutitung—A present from Mapaar—Our first bath.

EARLY in the morning I was awakened from a confused dream, in which Herr Frikell, Dr. Lynn, and a black conjurer played the principal parts, and found Kert at my side entreating me to be the first to interview the witch-doctor. On our way towards the clump of bushes where the *soenya* and his companions were already on the move, skinning two jackals, which they had trapped during the night in their steel traps, and cooking them for their morning's meal, Kert confided to me that although he knew the white man did not believe in witchcraft, he and Dirk were firm believers in it. It was *oonser klogh* (our belief), and he begged me to say nothing, but to leave him to do all the talking. To this I willingly consented, and Kert took his seat quite happily—and I am bound to add quite familiarly—directly in front of the great fortune-teller, with a half-friendly, half-submissive air. We found Klas and Dirk already there, squatted on their hams, and forming with the others a half-circle round the great man. There was dead silence for a few minutes after our arrival, broken

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only by the rattle of the old bones and other charms of the witch-doctor, as he sorted out those most suited for the occasion. Old Kert must have told him beforehand that we should attend upon him for advice, for he set to work with a business-like air, as though quite accustomed to be consulted by a select party of Europeans anxious to hear him divulge the dread secrets of the future.

All eyes were upon him as he rose deliberately, and, shaking the charms in the hollows of his hands, cast them on the ground. As they went down his eyeballs went up, till nothing but the whites was visible. Then he smiled, and, bowing his head, picked up the bones and cast them to the earth again, this time muttering some unintelligible gibberish as he arranged them with his forefinger. Then, suddenly looking up, he laughed—and such a laugh! The corners of his mouth kissed his ears; his lips stood apart till nothing was visible but his great white teeth and red gums; never before did I so fully realize the idea of a man "laughing all over his face." Then, suddenly relaxing, he addressed himself to Kert, who translated the utterances of the oracle into Afrikander-Dutch. We should have many difficulties, but should overcome them all. Some of our people would be sick, but they would not die. Our expedition would be successful, and we should find the little people near a big water. At first they would refuse to come with us, but afterwards they would consent. The sieur would shoot giraffe and other big game. A lion would attack him, but he would escape unhurt. He would also see ostriches, but would not kill any. Finally, we should go to a place where sama was bitter and water scarce, but, after a time, all would be well.

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All this was simply the usual gipsy fortune-telling of the European Romany, localized to suit the surroundings. It is wonderful how the same spirit pervades all these fortune-tellers, whatever their race, wherever their residence. If we had had a woman among our number, there is no doubt that the "pretty lady" would have been warned against the young man with fair hair, but would have been assured of the fervent love of the beautiful gentleman with the dark eyes. The prognostications were all among the probabilities, and some of them were sure to be verified; but I was somewhat surprised at the reference to the "little people," till, on making further inquiry, Kert confessed that he had been to see the *soenya* early in the morning, before calling me, and that the wily old fortune-teller had wormed out of him all our plans.

When the oracle had finished, and before he had time to pick up his talismanic bones, I rose, and deliberately gathering them together, rattled them in my hands in the approved style, and threw them on the ground, just as the *soenya* had done. Then, picking one up between my right forefinger and thumb, pretended to pass it into my left hand, while really palming it, *à la* Dr. Lynn, in the right; now, placing my left hand over my mouth, I made violent pretence to swallow the bone. During the spasmodic efforts to get outside the bone, I sidled up to Kert, who was standing close by with eyes and mouth and coat-pockets wide open, and, dropping the bone into one of the latter, showed him my hands, and asked him to convince himself that the bone was really swallowed and not merely concealed in my mouth.

Having repeated this manœuvre with all the bones in

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succession, I next took out a small pocket-knife, and stooping down passed it several times over the side of my leg at the knee-joint, each time raising it towards my mouth, increasing the rapidity of my movements till at last, suddenly bending both knees, I half squatted on the ground, and at the same instant raising both hands to the mouth, pretended to swallow the knife, which all the time was safely held in the bend of the knee. As I slowly rose, Lulu, according to a pre-concerted arrangement, came up behind me, wiping his hands on a towel, which he dropped over the knife as I released it from my knee. The mouths of all the onlookers were wide agape, and as I, imitating their example, went round with my mouth open to show that the knife was not there, Lulu picked up the towel and with it the knife, innocently asking what was the matter. At this interruption I solemnly warned him away, telling him to keep silence and wait like the rest; so he made his way behind the *soenya* and secreted the knife in a cow's horn that lay beside him.

At the same moment I walked across to the head man, who sat farthest from the witch-doctor, and with a copying-ink pencil marked sundry hieroglyphics on his face, assuring him, through Kert, that so long as he kept those marks there he would find plenty of jackals, but no feathers, and meet plenty of tribes to trade with.

"You have," I continued, "brought such and such things to sell," and, calling to mind sundry scraps of information I had picked up from Kert and Dirk's conversation the previous night, I described nearly everything he had with him,—how many skins and what kinds, how many traps, how much powder and tobacco, &c., &c.,—down to the shape of a peculiar

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piece of lead the chief of the party carried with him, and by which they all set great store as a charm. In return I asked him to describe the contents of my waggon.

Whether the *soenya* attributed my powers to the possession of his old bones or not, I don't know, but he was evidently uneasy about them, for, as soon as I had finished, he begged Kert to ask me to restore them to him.

"First let the *soenya* give me back my knife," I said, and, looking him straight in the face, held out my hand for it. With a sickly smile he protested that he had it not. It was with his bones: for had not the white man swallowed it too? "Let the *soenya* search himself first, before he says he has it not. He says what he does not know," I replied, and, every eye being turned upon him, he began slowly to look for the knife. When he found it in the horn, where Lulu had placed it, his countenance assumed an expression of the greatest wonder, and I'm positive his black face turned pale. Never did I see a nigger look so nonplussed. He seemed quite afraid to hand it to me; but I had not quite done with him yet, so, as I reached over for the knife, I dropped a half-crown into a fold of his skin blanket, and, stepping a few paces back, produced another coin, on which I made Kert scratch a cross with the point of my restored penknife: then, making the usual "pass" from one hand to the other, held up my fist and told Kert to blow upon it. Of course, when I opened my hand the half-crown was gone. The *soenya* was inclined to be indignant when I told him to search himself a second time; but, as he moved, the other half-crown rolled from his blanket to the ground. I smoothed him over by extolling his

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powers as a witch-doctor for being able to take the coin out of my closed hand, and then promised him his old bones back again. Taking off old Kert's hat, I held it under my head for a moment, with a few contortions as a make-believe, and then replaced the hat the wrong way up on Kert's head, and told him to jump. As he did so I struck his pocket with a stick, and called the *soenya* himself to put his hand into it. Kert was too awe-struck to object, but what surprised me was that the old pretender, who knew that all he did himself was humbug, should have shown signs of real fear as he tremblingly dipped his hand into Kert's pocket and took out, one by one, his cherished charms.

This ended the performance. The Kaffirs immediately began to pack up, and their great "wealth" of merchandise, about which Kert had talked so big, consisted of about 2 or 3 lbs. of green coffee, 2 lbs. of powder, and half a box of caps, a pound or two of tobacco, and a chunk of lead about as big as a man's two fists! Each thing was rolled up separately in nets strapped to the backs of the oxen, while a few pots and pans and wooden bowls hanging outside, prominent above everything else, looked like the remnants of a travelling tinker's shop after a hard winter.

Just then Fritz called out that breakfast was ready, so, telling Kert to find out from the Kaffirs where the nearest water was and what was the best course for us to steer, we returned to our laager, Lulu intending to go back after breakfast and photograph the rag-and-bone man and his companions just before starting with their oxen all packed; but when he got back he found they had vanished without saying a word to any one.

Meanwhile, Kert had ascertained that there was water at a place called Kang Pan, about a day and a

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half to the north-east, in the K'gung Forest, on the borders of which we had been travelling for some days. This route would take us to Lake N'gami, a little to the west of which there was a tribe of "little people" known as M'Kabbas. Klas and Dirk both said they knew the Pan referred to, and added that if there was any water in it we should be sure to find a wandering tribe called Balala there, gathering the large water-melons (*mangatan*) and Kaffir corn. These hopes raised our spirits high, and in an hour after breakfast we were on the march again. The very oxen seemed to smell the water, or at least we imagined so, and we drove on till quite late at night, merely outspanning to give the animals a rest. We were now nearing the forest, and the trees became so plentiful that, in the bad light, great care had to be taken to avoid running against them. The soil was much the same—sand covered with thin long grass—but the prevalence of trees gave the country the appearance of an English park, many of them resembling an old well-grown elm in appearance. The k'gung-tree, from which the forest takes its name, is very similar to the giraffe-tree, of which a few were scattered here and there. At a distance the difference between them is hardly noticeable, but the k'gung-tree has a short hooked thorn, dark in colour, while that of the mimosa is long, straight, and white.

The k'gung-tree under which we outspanned contained a most remarkable specimen of the nest of the sociable fink, a small bird something like a sparrow, numbers of which take a joint-stock interest in a huge nest built under one roof, but divided, like workmen's model dwelling-houses, into separate tenements. Stretching from branch to branch of the tree was a

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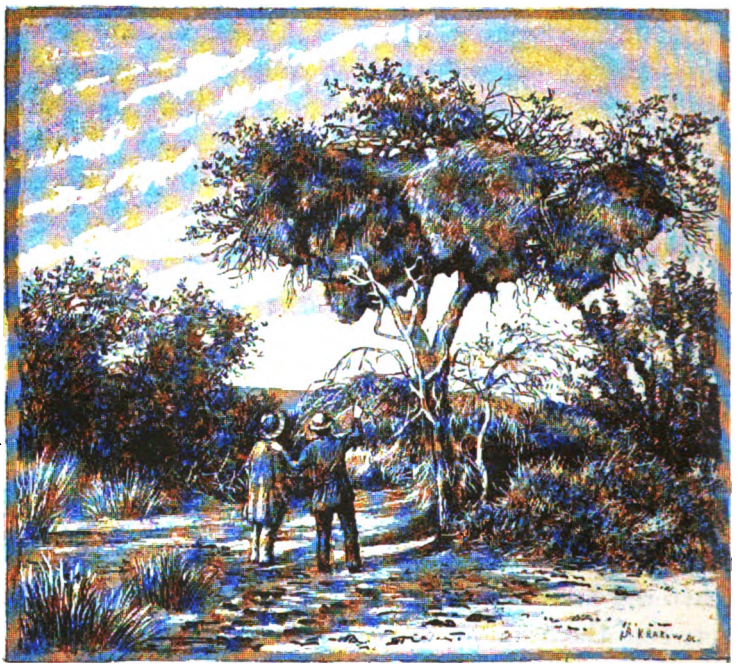
huge thatch of grass, woven together into a dense mass, nearly six feet thick, and weighing more than a ton. As you stood underneath this roof-like structure, you could see it was pierced with hundreds of holes, from each of which peeped a pair of bright eyes. This immense mass of nests must have been the work of years, having probably been added to year after year,



NEST OF GROSBEAK.

as new season's nests were built beneath the old. The accompanying photograph of the tree, taken by Lulu, will give some idea of its appearance. From a distance it looked like a big umbrella.

Next morning, about nine o'clock, we arrived at the Pan, but, to our intense disgust, found it had recently dried up. Having been without water so long, we

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had built great hopes on our arrival at this spot, but now we were worse off than ever. No water, and not a sama within miles of us, for we had got out of the sama belt. Disappointment was depicted on every face, and poor Lulu was in despair. He suffered more than any one from the want of water, for, while the rest of us could manage to drink the sama juice as a substitute, he could not quench his thirst with it; with him it was like sea-water, the more he drank the worse his thirst became, and we had consequently to allow him more than his fair share of water. Often, like the melancholy Jaques, would he take himself off to a distance to relieve his feelings by a soliloquy out of hearing, and then, coming back to the waggon, heave a sigh and offer, in the words of Sheridan, "All that I have, all that I am, all that I hope for,"—my property here and my interest in heaven—for a square drink of water. As often would Fritz quietly draw a cup of water, and, placing it in a particular corner, where Lulu knew where to look for it, enjoy by proxy the feeling of satisfaction which Lulu's face betrayed. Poor Lulu! His stomach was not made for this country. I used to attribute his abnormal thirst to excessive smoking; but he could not bring himself to abandon his pipe. "You like the sama: I like my pipe," was all the answer I got when begging him to try a week without smoking.

"No; I don't *like* the sama, but I make the best of it. This kind of life is a pleasure to me, and I would put up with anything for the novelty of the thing." Even when the sama water was bitter instead of sweet, I drank it with as much relish as an Irishman would drink whisky. But, as for Lulu, to parody the well-known lines—

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A desert, far from river's brim,
A sandy desert was to him,
And nothing more;

and he would not willingly undergo what he had suffered while we were among the sama—no, not for all the "negatives" in the world! Of that he was positive.

Seeing traces of mud in the bed of the Pan, I called for the shovels: where there is mud there must be water, just as much as where there is smoke there must be fire; and in an hour we had a hole four feet deep and six feet wide, with a foot of milky-white water at the bottom. Here, after letting it stand awhile, the cattle were to drink, while we dug another hole for ourselves; but it was with the greatest difficulty that I prevailed upon the lazy Bastards to take up their shovels again. They would rather have partaken of the water, even after the cattle had fouled it.

Begone, hard work,
You and I will never be friends,

was the burden of their song; and the bulk of the labour fell upon us three white men. A European could stand more hard work in the hot sun than half a dozen of these lazy loafers. A Bushman is a born idler; far harder to get to work than a pure black: he is very good to fetch and carry, and will hunt well on foot, but is totally unfitted for anything like labour; in fact, does not seem to understand it.

However, we managed to get a pit dug, in which we let the water settle before filling our barrels, though the milky colour still remained; but anything was better, Lulu said, than the sticky sama mucilage.

On the other side of the Pan we found the deserted kraals of some Balalas, who, when the water failed,

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had made themselves scarce too. Close by were a lot of young gourds growing, which Kert said were Kaffir melons; they were quite unlike our English water-melon, nor were they like a pumpkin; but, whatever they were, there were none ripe enough to eat, the Balalas having evidently stripped the vines not long since.

Giving the oxen the whole day to rest, we started in the cool of the evening for what is called the Balala country, and, continuing our journey till about ten o'clock, outspanned in a clump of k'gung-trees, with a patch of three-thorn bushes on one side. The weather was getting warmer the farther north we got, and that night I had my hammock slung between the waggon-wheel and an adjoining tree, intending to sleep out for the first part of the night, and to return to the waggon, if necessary, in the early morning—when it is always cool, if not even cold. But our hopes of rest were no more to be realized than our expectations of water. We were sitting around the fire, in a semicircle, a waggon on each side of us, and the noi-bush opposite, listening to Dirk, who was telling a story of an adventure with a lion, when, suddenly, without the least warning, crash came something right into our midst, scattering the sand and the hot ashes of the fire over us. Klas, who was kneeling forward to reach a hot cinder to light his pipe, screamed out, "Die leeouw beit mij" ("The lion bites me"), and at the same moment his voice was drowned by a loud, deep, blood-curdling growl which told that a lion was really in our midst. I was knocked over into the noi-bush, but scrambling up again saw by the flickering light of the fire a lion stretched at full length flat on the ground,

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his tail lashing to and fro close to my face, and evidently clutching some object that lay on the ground beneath him. A boy's foot protruding told me that it was Klas that was thus tightly held in the lion's grip. Not a moment was to be lost if the boy was to be saved, but I knew not what to do. On one side was the lion, on the other an impassable noi-bush; if I moved towards the waggon, the lion would see me; in front was the smouldering fire.

Happily, the sudden thought struck me that lions were afraid of fire. There were but a couple of half-charred sticks lying on the embers, and making one jump I seized one of these, and rammed it right under his tail, at the same instant kicking the hot coals over the growling brute. Instantly, with a growl, the lion loosed his hold of poor Klas, and made three bounds, alighting on the shoulders of our black wheel-ox "Blomberg" tearing him down to the ground. By this time nearly all the Bushmen had seized guns and fire-brands, and boldly rushed forward to the rescue. Bang! bang! went shot after shot, but the lion heeded neither shots nor shouts, but with low growls clung tenaciously to his prey. Then I heard Lulu's voice from the waggon, calling me and asking if I was safe. "Never mind me; shoot!" and his second ball bowled the lion out. Quickly making some torches of dry grass, we cautiously approached, and found the lion with his claws still sticking in the shoulders and neck of the bullock, but quite dead. Lulu had shot him through the eye. We pulled him off the ox, who to our astonishment gave himself a roll and stood quietly up.

Our next thought was of poor Klas. Going back to the scene of the lion's first spring, we found him

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sitting up, with a half-dazed look, and smothered with sand and ashes, muttering, "Ek es dooed" ("I am dead")—which was pretty good evidence that he was very much alive. Getting a lantern, we carefully examined him, and found his face a little scratched, some ugly wounds in his thigh, evidently from the lion's hind claws, and his shoulder out of place, but fortunately no bones broken. The dislocation was soon set right, and then we carefully washed and dressed his wounds. All that he could tell us was that while he was getting a light for his pipe, something struck him on the head, and then crushed his face and chest into the sand, while tearing at his legs. He guessed from this that it was a lion, and had time to cry out once before his mouth was buried in the sand. Keeping his eyes shut, he did not venture to look up, even when the lion had left him, for he expected him to return every moment. Klas was of course the hero of the evening, and came in for everybody's sympathy, but, considering the narrow escape he had had, he was really not so much hurt as frightened; and he felt sure that, if the lion had not killed him, we had broken his shoulder, for "he felt it crack when we pulled it so."

On comparing notes, it appeared that Fritz was the only one of our party who had gone to get a gun, and it was he that had fired at the lion as the bullock was attacked. Kert and Dirk simply ran off, and hid themselves in the waggon. Lulu, whose aim had proved so sure, was in the waggon asleep, but was awakened by the terrific roar of the lion.

But there was still something to do besides talking. Blomberg's wounds, though deep, were not past cure, and a few stitches in his shoulder, and a mixture of

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tar and grease from the waggon-wheels as an ointment, promised, with a few days' rest, to put him in harness again. The rest of the cattle, however, were not to be seen anywhere. They had stampeded, and the rest of the night was spent, torch in hand, in searching for them. Not one did we find that night, but the constant movement kept us awake, and the lights served to keep off any more unwelcome visitors. It was not till midday that the Bushmen succeeded in recovering the missing cattle, and two hours later we inspanned and, christening the spot "Lion's Surprise," shook the dust of the place from off our feet.

The Bushmen dressed Klas' wound twice a day with a pulpy kind of weed, which was very cooling and healing, and he was soon able to bear his weight on his leg. He was looking forward to a speedy recovery, being anxious to be well by the time we reached the country where the elephants abounded, as ivory was a good price, and was the only thing besides feathers that paid to hunt.

The skins of animals are not worth the trouble of carrying, except to Bastards and natives, who have to tan them before they are sold. The giraffe skin is the most valuable, the thick parts, off the back and neck, being cut into strips for soles of boots, called *veldt schoons*, which the natives make themselves; the other parts are cut in narrow strips, which when dried are shaped into whips.

The mode of tanning is to roll the skin up as soon as it is taken off the animal, when the heat of the sun causes decomposition to set in and the hair becomes loosened and is easily pulled off. The skin is then stretched out to dry for a few days: then it is mois-

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tened; then rubbed and twisted and pulled and trampled on till nearly dry, when grease is applied, and again it is pulled, stretched, rubbed, and twisted until it is as pliable as cloth and as white as snow. Sometimes after this process it is put into a liquid prepared from the root of a small bush. This root contains a great deal of tannin and gives the leather a reddish colour. If the natives are in a hurry, they will have a skin tanned, coloured, and cut up into strips in two days. The small skins are usually done by the women: the heavier ones the men have to do.

The rope that one of our waggons was pulled by was made of ox-hide cut into strips, which were tied up in a bunch to a branch of a tree, and a heavy stone attached to the lower end and twisted round and round until it would go no more; then it would be let go again, and this was continued until they were soft enough to be tanned. Gems-bok and koodoo hides are considered stronger than any other, and we had a few lengths made ready in case our *trek-tow* broke.

We missed the old black wheeler, who had to keep company with the cows while invalided; and still more did we miss Klas's skill with the whip; but Fritz volunteered to take his place, as he knew more about oxen and how to drive them than all the others put together, and by evening we had made such good progress that we were in sight of Lihutitung, overtaking a string of women carrying gourds full of water, and singing as they trooped lightly home. In feature, they were not all types of the highest beauty, though some of the younger ones were by no means ill-favoured; but one and all were well-built, with well-proportioned limbs, bodies erect, and gait free, their habit of carrying their burdens on their heads

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showing their figures off to advantage. Some, with a baby strapped to their backs, were partially covered with a skin shawl; others, evidently the unmarried maidens, wore nothing but a bunch of short cords, like leather shoe-strings, hanging in front from a line fastened round the waist. Some of them, on seeing us, squatted behind a bush to hide, while others ran on in front and entered their huts.

As we entered the village—if a few scattered huts could be so called—dozens of naked children of both sexes, and of all sizes and ages, from two up to fourteen, came outside and gazed silently at us, standing as still as statues, and never replying by word or look when we spoke to them. Near the centre of the place we halted, sending Kert forward to announce our arrival to the chief—Mapaar by name—and ask permission to outspan. Returning in half an hour, Kert brought with him several women, laden with calabashes and tortoise-shells full of Kaffir corn and pounded melon-seeds, with four large melons and a supply of a kind of spirit distilled from the corn. With the women were two men, appointed to show our ox-carers the way to a spring where they were to water, and point out a pan where we could bathe. Having presented their offerings, the women retired, and we were left to ourselves the rest of that day, not a soul coming near us either to trade or, more wonderful still, to beg.

The first thing we did was to make the most of our bath—the first we had had for weeks. It was a bath to be remembered in after years. To drink sama-water is bad enough; but to be condemned to wash in it is worse, and this was what we had to do for weeks together. After every ablution it is necessary to use sand to get rid of the mucilaginous fluid. The hands

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and arms and legs will stand this treatment well enough; but the face, exposed all day to the scorching sun, is too tender to be subjected to the use of this roughest of rough "towels." The consequence is that the face has to go unwashed altogether. I once tried the effect of washing my face with sama-water. My beard, which I had allowed to grow for some weeks, was glued into a sticky mass, which the hot sun cemented so fast that I could hardly pull it apart. To shave it off was impossible, the varnish of sama being too hard for any razor to penetrate. No amount of ordinary bathing would disintegrate the mass, and I was almost reduced to the indignity of keeping a pan of boiling water hung under my chin for the purpose of bringing my beard to its normal condition. It was not till it had "grown itself clean" that I got rid of the effects of my first—and last—attempt to wash my face in sama-water.

How we luxuriated in that pan at Lihutitung need not be described. The fact that our feet sank some inches into the clay at the bottom did not detract from our enjoyment; our ablutions might change the water into mud, but that did not matter. As the old proverb says,—

> 'Tis the greatest blessing God has gi'en,
> That dirty water will wash clean.

We had often drunk chalk-water, why should we not wash in it? As long as it was not sama-juice we were happy. Lulu positively revelled in it; the presence of water was quite enough to put him into good humour, and besides plenty of water there were lots of things to photograph, and there was abundance of fresh meat. To me this last was a great treat, after a long spell of *biltong*.

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Next morning, early, an ox was brought to our waggon, and then and there slaughtered, dressed, and hung on the branch of a tree. It was a present from the chief, to whom we shortly afterwards sent Kert to announce our intention of paying a visit. About ten o'clock we were received in a small court in front of the "big kraal," a thatch-roofed, circular hut, made of poles stuck upright into the ground, interlaced with grass and then plastered over with clay, in the centre of which sat the chief.

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CHAPTER XIII.

An interview with the chief—A royal beggar—Marriage made easy—A visit to Mapaar's garden—Curious beverages—Mapaar enjoys a drink of eau-de-Cologne—House-building spider—Mapaar invites us to a hunt—I offend my Black Beauty—How to make thick milk—Hunting the gems-bok—The disappointed photographer—Distributing the spoil.

Not a word greeted us as we entered, Mapaar merely motioning us to sit on the skins scattered in a half-circle in front of him. Having duly squatted, I made a signal to my two Bushmen to bring forward the present I had bought for the chief—two bright-coloured striped woollen blankets, which I solemnly laid before him. Still never a word deigned Mapaar, not even a look did he condescend to cast on my gaudy gift, and I had time to take stock of him—a big, heavy-set ebony nigger, about forty years of age, with an intelligent face, characterized by all the cunning of the Kaffir.

Kert was the first to break silence; with many gesticulations, and evidently with frequent references to myself, turning half round every few minutes, as if appealing to me to corroborate him, he held forth for fully twenty minutes, and then, evidently satisfied with his effort, sat down with the air of a popular orator resuming his seat amid the plaudits of the assembled multitude. But no sound greeted Kert's speech; what he said might have been very beautiful and very true; on the other hand, it might have been

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the reverse of truthful; but neither the encouraging "hear, hear," nor the defiant "no, no," interrupted its cadence.

Of course I could not understand a word of it until Mapaar addressed me in reply, and then I found that Kert had been taking a little advantage of his position as interpreter and spokesman, as his translation of the chief's answer showed. Mapaar was very pleased, he said, to see the great London captain, and was glad that the Queen was well, and proud to hear that she wished to hear from him and had inquired particularly after his health. My blankets were very beautiful, but he had heard that I had a lion's skin in my waggon, and he, as chief of the Bakalahari, would like to have it for his kraal. London's chief was a great man to kill the lion, and Mapaar would show it to his people when the great captain was gone; and so, with many compliments, the royal beggar made the most of his opportunity, and made it plain that he would not be denied the skin. He even went so far as to explain that it was the big lion's skin, and not the little one, that he must have. There was no help for it. If it had been my choicest possession his whim must be gratified. The skin was not of any great value, but I had wished to keep it as a "trophy." However, it must go, and so, congratulating myself that it was not my pet rifle, or my best pair of boots, I sent at once for the skin, and presented it to him with the best grace in the world. The chief was evidently much pleased, and handed me back my blankets, which I returned, saying I never took anything back that I had once given, and so the audience ended, Mapaar telling Kert that I was welcome to anything he had while I stayed here, and that he had placed a separate kraal apart for my use.

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Two attendants at once showed us the way to the hut which was to be my home for the next week. At the entrance stood two old women, but on entering I was somewhat surprised to find standing in the middle of the floor, which was covered with skin mats, a young woman who was evidently expecting us, and who made no sign of an intention to retire. Kert explained that the height of hospitality among the Balala was to provide a visitor with a wife *ad interim*, and that the dark beauty in question had been allotted to me by the thoughtful consideration of Mapaar. I must at least make a pretence of satisfaction, and accept the favour in the spirit that prompted it, if I did not wish to offend the whole village.

Here was I, in the interior of the Dark Continent, a wanderer on the face of the earth, far from home, relations, and friends, suddenly provided with a home, and a wife, all ready, without trouble, expense, or ceremony. This beats the matrimonial agency business hollow. How many men would be glad to have some of the customs of Africa acclimatized in Europe and America, and marriage made easy *à la* Bakalahari!

And how many more men would be happy if divorces were as quickly arranged as in the Kalahari desert, which certainly carries off the palm from America in this respect!

"The dark beauty hath an exceeding strong aroma, very different from that of Rimmel's shop!" I urged.

"Oh!" interposed Fritz, who evidently read what was passing in my mind, if he did not quite understand my words, "dat is noddings; gif she to me, und I vill vatch dat. One so nice as half is good for me enough. I would not my nose up turn eef I

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her in Jarmany see. I am glad eef I find anodder so half as young."

But I felt it would not do to humour Master Fritz at the risk of offending Mapaar; so making semblance of being pleased, I sent for my blankets and took possession of my own domicile.

Towards evening, going over to the waggons to see how my followers were doing, I found a number of women about, making themselves quite at home, and asked Fritz who they were.

With unfeigned satisfaction beaming from his face, he replied, "Gott hat uns nicht verlassen; die Frauenzimmer sind unsere Weiber."

The other men were all equally happy, with plenty of meat, and wives to cook it for them; they were quite resigned to their fate, and for once I envied them. I could not accommodate myself to circumstances so easily; so staying out for a time to reflect how best to act, I returned to my hut just before dark, and, with an air of great fatigue, threw myself on my blankets and feigned sleep, to avoid offending my dusky bride, who presently stole out of the hut, attracted by the singing and revelry going on among our neighbours at the waggons. As the sun rose she returned, bringing some milk and mealies for my breakfast, and seemed quite pleased when I partook of her fare. I motioned her to join me, but she drew back, shocked at the idea, which the tribe will not countenance, of a woman eating with a man—even though he were her husband!

Breakfast over, I sent for Kert to ask leave of the chief to visit his gardens, being anxious to see how they cultivated the land, and what crops they grew. Mapaar himself quickly came, with quite a retinue of

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followers: one carrying his folding-chair—a wooden frame with strips of leather for the seat—another with a fan, a third with a skin, and so forth.

The old chief, who was in high feather, asked carefully after my health, and laughed loud when told that I was well, and much refreshed after my fatigues, having slept soundly all night.

The gardens, only a few yards distant, were fenced with thick rows of noi thorn-bush, carefully laid with the butt-end inwards and the bushy side projecting outwards, and forming a perfect barrier. The gate was a large thorn-bush, which required some skill to remove without being hurt. Each chief of the tribe had his allotted garden to cultivate. Mapaar's was, of course, the largest, but did not exceed an acre, which seemed scarcely sufficient to supply all his wants. Agriculture has not advanced much beyond the cultivation of mealies and melons, of each of which there were two crops, one nearly ripe and the other green, the first crop of mealies being always at once followed by the planting of melons, and the first crop of melons by the sowing of mealies. The "melons" included both the large round variety of squash, and the long crook-necked kind. In one corner was a small patch of wheat, recently sown; and then Mapaar took me behind a row of mealies to show me what he evidently considered the gem of his garden—about two hundred stalks of tobacco, of which he was exceedingly proud. Putting his hand into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of stuff that looked like green tea; but the smell was the smell of tobacco. It was the produce of his own garden, prepared by cutting the leaf off and letting it wither and dry in the shade, and then, before the colour fades, slicing it into shreds, which retain the

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green colour instead of changing to the orthodox brown. Lulu smoked some of it, and said it was very good.

Next to his real tobacco, Mapaar's special care was devoted to the cultivation of a patch of docha, a species of wild hemp, which nearly all the tribes grow, and dry, and smoke instead of tobacco, and which has as great a charm for them as opium for a Chinese, and something of the same effect.

After the inspection of his gardens, Mapaar paid a visit to our laager, when I offered him some ginger-brandy. He tasted "gingerly," but did not like it, and asked for eau-de-Cologne instead. He did not *say* "eau-de-Cologne," but that was what he meant, and Fritz, understanding him, brought out a bottle, for I had fortunately laid in a store of it, having been warned at Kimberley that it was a favourite liquor with the natives, among whom it divided popularity with Perry Davis' Pain Killer! The traders, having once fostered the native taste for stimulants, had to keep the supply equal to the demand somehow; and when they were out of spirit sold a "perfume," and when the perfume ran short substituted for it a "drug." The cork being extracted from the worst brand of Maria Farina, Mapaar put the bottle to his lips, and never took it away till he had emptied the contents down his throat.

And then he asked for more!

I was at first afraid to comply with his modest request, fearing that if it disagreed with him in any way his people would lay the blame to us.

"Don't you 'fraid," said Fritz, who was quite up to the business; "you vatch it, he could six up him get," and almost before I could utter an assenting "All right;

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give him another," the second bottle was brought out. It did not take long to send it after the first, and then his chiefship walked off unceremoniously to his palace of mud-bedaubed poles and grass, as happy as any three-bottle-man to his Pall Mall Club.

Most of the day was spent in overhauling our collection of bird-skins and insects. Some of the former had been packed away as quickly as they were taken off the victims' bodies, with merely a rubbing of arsenical soap, and I was fearful lest decomposition would have set in, especially as some of them were very fat. The first to be examined was a large vulture's skin, and my worst fears seemed likely to be realized, for, notwithstanding that this specimen had had four days to dry, it was quite rotten wherever a piece of fat remained, and fell to pieces at the least touch; but, strange to say, every one that had been packed away hurriedly without drying was perfectly sound.

Leaving Lulu to do all the re-packing, I went prospecting for specimens around the waggons. The first thing I saw was a huge spider, coming out of a hole in the ground. Kert spied it out first, and drew my attention to it; he called it a *haar-snider* (hair-cutter), and said it had a little box with a lid to it, in which it lived, a few inches beneath the sand. As we approached it retreated down the hole, so taking a shovel, we dug carefully down, and sure enough found at a short distance beneath the surface a little square, box-like nest, made of spider's web, the upper side of which was suddenly pushed open, and out darted the spider, the lid falling shut behind him. In an instant my hand was on him, and despite Kert's cries of "Don't, sieur, it is poisonous"—everything that

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crawls is *giftogh* (poisonous) in Kert's eyes—I managed to secure him by the body. Unfortunately, in reaching after him the sand fell in and ruined his house; but I soon made him another home in the lid of one of my collecting-boxes. His powerful jaws were armed with a double pair of sharp saws, with which he could, no doubt, have inflicted a pretty severe bite; but luckily I had caught him just behind the head, and now his biting days were over for ever.

Just then a messenger came in from Mapaar, to say that some gems-bok had been seen close by, and that a hunt would take place on the morrow, some of his swiftest runners having been ordered out. Would the great captain be ready by daylight to join the sport? We might bring our guns and shoot those that escaped his hunters. I asked the messenger to explain the native mode of hunting the animal, and was surprised to find that the custom was for the hunters to run it down on foot, and kill it with the assegai. The idea of a man outpacing a gems-bok was hardly credible, as I had so often known these animals to outrun my mare, and I was of course delighted to accept Mapaar's invitation, not only for the chance of a shot, but for the sake of seeing a hunt conducted under such novel conditions. Not so Lulu, however; he declared that he would not take the trouble to leave the waggons for all the hunts in the world.

"But think what a chance for a photograph! The Bushmen will carry all the things, and you can have snap shots at everything without fear of wounding anybody."

"That's another matter," replied the camera-enthusiast; "I would walk miles for the chance of a good plate. But it's all very well to talk of hurting

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nobody. Here have I been trying to photograph the young girls carrying the water-jars on their way from the spring, and as soon as ever I got the camera into focus off they darted into the bush as if shot. I sent Kert to explain that I wasn't going to hurt them, but it was no use."

"You must get the range of the path and then hide yourself in the waggon and have a shot at them as they pass yonder k'gung-tree."

"Oh, I'll have their photographs yet, the bashful blacks; the only thing is to have an extra sensitive plate and the snap-action shutter ready. With that I could have taken the lion as he jumped on poor Klas, if his majesty had only had the politeness to give notice of his intention to call upon us. What a splendid picture that would have made if it had only been daylight! But it's a shame to talk like that. I'm afraid we shall have to leave the poor boy here, for he is not so well as when these people first doctored his wound."

Towards dusk my kraal-companion sent word to say that supper was ready; so, inviting Lulu to join us at the feast, I obeyed the summons. On entering the hut, thinking to show my appreciation of her presence, I patted the "lady of the house" on the head; but a little caress of this kind she did not understand, and only received it with the blackest of black looks. Perhaps I had again inadvertently sinned against the social code of the people; but the thought did not trouble me much, and certainly did not spoil my appetite; so, squatting on the floor in the approved fashion of the country, Lulu and I did justice to the provisions, using fingers and pocket-knives for lack of other implements. Altogether the *menu* was not to be despised. Pounded mealies, boiled and then cooked

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in milk; stewed squash or pampoon, and mutton roasted in wood-embers—these supplied by the *frau*—with coffee and sugar added out of my own store, did not make a bad bill of fare. The mealies were particularly nice, and we partook of them freely; so freely indeed as to evoke expressions of pleasure from the elderly females who acted as handmaidens, and who called the attention of the *interim* Mrs. Farini to the fact.

By the way, it is awkward not to have any specific name by which to designate the lady in question. Her real name I never could quite pronounce, and I am sure I could not spell it. I cannot bring myself to speak to her as my "wife;" *jungfrau* is neither English nor Kaffir; "housekeeper" is formal; so I will cut the knot by calling her "Black Beauty."

But black beauty was in a bad temper, and did not care whether I ate or not. I was sorry for her, for she no doubt felt it an insult to be neglected by the white "captain," while her inferiors were made much of by some of his companions; but I could not bring myself to the idea of fondling in any but the most distant way the black beauty, malodorous, greasy, unrobed, unwashed, and unkempt as she was.

When we had finished it was her ladyship's turn to eat. Her despondent state had not affected her appetite, for she consumed enough for three men, washing down the hearty repast by drinking a small calabash full of milk, which only a few minutes before had been brought in fresh from the cow, but which was now quite thick. This astonished me, for I knew that the thick milk which all Kaffirs prize so highly, takes some time to get ready—at least among the Zulus, who prepare it by filling skins, which already contain a

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certain amount of "leaven," with fresh milk, and subjecting them to considerable agitation. What necromancy had been employed to "turn" the milk so soon in this case? Had the Black Beauty's sour temper effected the change? I tried to ask by means of pantomime, but could not make them understand; they thought I asked for more milk, and sent for a fresh supply, which came in a quarter of an hour, the froth still on it, quite fresh from the cow. Seeing a little thick milk still left in the calabash, I pointed to it and then to the new. Now they understood, and one of the Abigails went out and brought in two little berries, about the size of a red currant, and nearly the same colour, but not quite so bright. Taking them between her thumb and finger, she pricked them and squeezed a drop or two of greenish fluid out of each, letting it fall into the new milk. In less than half a minute it was quite thick, but still remained perfectly sweet. The berry itself had a peculiar bitter flavour. It grows on a low prickly bush, not unlike a rose-bush, some of the seeds of which I secured, thinking this Kaffir substitute for rennet might be useful in Europe.

Having supped at Black Beauty's expense, I was ungracious enough to forsake her altogether that night, and slept in the waggon. Before daybreak two messengers came to call us, and in a few minutes we were ready; Kert, Fritz, and myself, with our rifles, Lulu and the Bushmen with the camera. Mapaar and his hunters were waiting for us at the door of his hut, so we started off without delay. Striking off from the level we walked for miles over the undulating plains—a billowy ocean of sand, the surface of which was ruffled by the wind into waves of grass. At last we halted at the foot of a long, high

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hill of sand, up which the hunters stole, lying flat as they reached the summit, and peeping carefully over the top. Soon they began signalling with their hands —a sign that they saw game—and the rest of the party dispersed in different directions, in accordance with the signals of those on the look-out. This lasted for a couple of hours. Not a word was spoken, and though at first it was interesting to watch the varying dispositions of the hunters, in obedience to the signs from the hill-top, the proceedings after a time became monotonous. At last, however, we received the welcome order to ascend the slope, which we hastened to do. I managed to reach the top in advance of the rest, and dropping flat on the ground, scrambled alongside the two look-outs. About two miles away to the left was a herd of gems-bok, grazing in the flat below; and about the same distance to the right could just be discovered two men, about two hundred yards apart, on a slight rise in the ground. Kert came and lay prone beside me, and Mapaar next to him; so I told him to ask the chief to explain the plan of operations, so that I might follow them with my glass. The only answer I got was that the chief was busy directing his men, and could not be bothered; but Kert had fortunately heard all about it from the hunters the night before, and could explain their tactics to me.

The herd was being gradually surrounded, the greater force of hunters being located some distance away to windward, as the gems-bok, when disturbed, always run up the wind. The point to which it was intended to drive the herd was where the two men already referred to could still be seen. Nowhere else, however, could a single human form be discerned;

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here and there I fancied I could detect a man's form working itself through the grass, or behind the bushes; but it was difficult to say for certain, even with the help of my glasses. Suddenly, however, at a signal from Mapaar, a semicircle of heads appeared above the grass, and at once began to contract round the as yet unsuspecting bok. The horns of the crescent advanced faster than the centre, so that the semicircular line became elliptical, thus ensuring that the prey should be driven towards the ambush prepared for them.

Now the line of hunters would be almost invisible; now we could from our elevated position see one or more of them, or trace their movements as they cleft their way through the dense grass, and as they drew closer and closer we wondered whether the prey thus stalked down the wind could not scent their pursuers, or catch some sound of their movements. The nearer the hunters drew towards their quarry the more difficult was it to trace their movements, so closely did they keep to the ground; but still it seemed impossible for them to reach the grazing herd without alarming them. Ah! the old bull has scented or heard them; up goes his head, displaying to perfection his magnificent pair of horns, and with two others he trots off. The whole herd will follow. No, they stop after advancing a few yards, and are quietly grazing again. Then, just behind them, I saw some strange object moving above the grass. Looking up at Mapaar, to see what he was doing, I found he was waving the tail of a jackal, fastened to a stick, and then perceived that the strange object was a similar signal in answer to his—one indicating the position of the hunters, the other ordering the fatal rush. Before I could look round again the hunters were on their feet, behind and

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quite close to the herd. The bok stood their ground for a moment as if paralyzed and then down went their horns over their backs and they ran off pell-mell, followed, almost at their own breakneck speed, by their pursuers. But surely no human being can hope to overtake them. The bok, I thought, will certainly escape after all; when up jumped a man almost in front of them, and making two springs, hurled an assegai at the leading bull and another at the second, and yet another at a third. This onslaught caused the herd to swerve towards us, when up jumped a second hunter in advance of the other, but on this side of the herd, and threw three or four spears, two at least of which took effect, one in the already-wounded leading bull.

For a moment the frightened beasts seemed to pause in their flight, but the hunters behind, rushing after them, forced their pace, and as they still advanced they were attacked by two other spearmen, one on each side, and so the chase continued, the hue and cry being joined by the hunters who had discharged their spears, and the frantic herd being relentlessly forced to run the gauntlet of a double line of hidden spearmen, who at frequent intervals sprang out of their ambush, first on one side and then on the other, and, after launching their assegais with unerring aim, darted in pursuit of the stricken prey. By this time the leading bull led no longer; with half a dozen spears sticking into him, so that he began to resemble a huge porcupine, he slackened his pace, and was passed by several of his followers, who, however, rushed to the front only to share the same fate as their leader.

Some of the huntsmen now began to drop out of the ranks of the pursuers, devoting their attention to the

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most severely wounded beasts, and leaving the rest of the herd to the tender mercies of their still-ambushed comrades. The old bull and two of his companions were already left far behind, and were standing at bay, each surrounded by a small group of hunters ready to take the first opportunity of rushing in and giving the *coup de grâce* with the broad, heavy spear which is reserved for hand-to-hand combat after the lighter assegais have done their work. There was no danger now of interrupting the plan of operations, so Lulu ran down the slope towards the nearest bull, carrying his camera, and followed by the two Bushmen with his other *impedimenta*, while I stayed to watch the fate of the still retreating remnant of the herd; but, by the time the last unwounded one had received its baptism of javelins, my attention was called to the final struggle of the old bull, so recently in the pride of his lusty strength, and now, his harem scattered to the winds, bidding a last defiance to his enemies. Game to the last, the handsome beast faced his foes, his head now thrown back, and his long, straight, sharp-pointed horns sweeping over his back and reaching to his hind-quarters: his neck now bent low, so that his horns came well forward and defied a direct attack. His tormentors gathered closer round him, firmly grasping their short spears in both hands; one of them made a rush at the bull's head, a movement which the animal at once met by a sidelong sweep of his horns; the next moment another man ran in from the opposite side and thrust his spear far in behind the shoulder. The bull staggered and fell, but with a last toss of his head he reached the hunter's arm with his horns, evidently wounding him, for the others gathered round the man as their prey fell at their feet.

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All this scene took less time to enact than to describe, and Lulu had not succeeded in getting near enough to take a picture of the group. When the bull fell, the rest of us ran down as hard as we could, but only got on the scene of battle in time to see the gems-bok more than half skinned. Lulu's face was a picture to see. If only he could have turned his camera upon himself, and perpetuated the mingled expression of hopeful excitement and intense disgust, as, breathless, he reached the scene just in time to be too late, and, looking round, saw that no other group was within range!

"Just my luck! When I stay at home, game is plentiful—at least, so you say; but when I bring out my camera the beasts all keep far out of range. I'll tell you what it is: if you don't manage matters better than this, I'll take a return-ticket home again. If I'd thought it necessary to mount my camera on horse-back, and take the portraits of the wild beasts while riding at full gallop, I would have brought a 'gun-camera' with me. Never mind; I'll just fix the thing up on top of the waggon, and take up my quarters there; and then, if I'd only got the electric light, I might manage even to get a portrait of the lion at home!"

While Lulu was thus letting off the steam, the hunters lit a fire, and soon had the entrails of the gems-bok roasting in the ashes, having first cleaned them by stripping them through their fingers. I begged the favour of the big bull's horns, which Mapaar promised to send to my waggon. He and all his following were in high glee. Out of the herd of thirteen gems-bok not one had escaped; and now began the task of collecting the skins and carcases,

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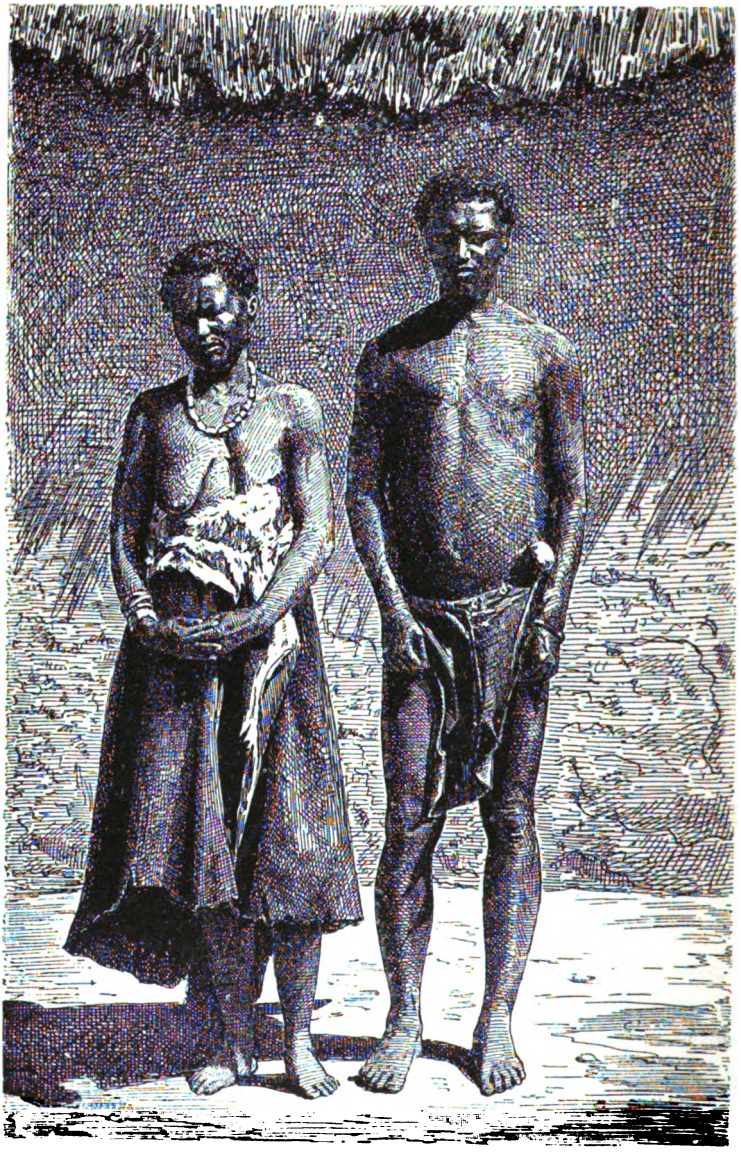

KING MAPAAR AND WIFE.

Page 223.

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and carrying them home to the village. Every man in the hunting party was laden either with skins or a large "joint." It was a weary walk back, but about half an hour from the village we were met by the women. What a pandemonium! every one shouting, dancing, and singing, and indulging in monkey-like antics, in which even the hunters, weary though they must have been, were nothing loth to join. Lulu managed to snatch a picture of the procession as it filed past Mapaar's hut, in front of which each man laid down his burden of skins or meat. Then a semi-circle was formed before the chief, and a distribution of the good things was being made, when a sudden stampede took place. I was standing next to Mapaar, admiring the orderly way in which every man came forward and received his allotted share of the booty, when the whole crowd seemed to melt away into air. I looked round, expecting to see a whole pack of lions at the very least, preparing for a spring, and there behind us, stood Lulu, with the dreaded camera pointed in the direction of the crowd. Mapaar himself shouted after his panic-stricken subjects, but they were deaf to all his behests.

Then, thinking to improve the occasion, we invited Mapaar to come and inspect the camera, which with some trepidation he did, and with Kert's aid we tried to explain its use. It was with much difficulty that at last we prevailed upon him to look into it, and to see for himself how harmless it was; but when he saw his kraal upside down he would look no more, and declared that it was witchcraft, and took the side of his people in desiring that it should be taken away. I should say that next day Lulu had his revenge by taking the portrait, not only of Mapaar himself, but

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of one of his women as well, unknown to them, as they stood outside the door of his mud palace; and here they are. When at last the evil thing was removed, the people sneaked back, one or two at a time, and received their share of the game; but the proceedings after this were very tame. Among the recipients were Black Beauty and her two attendant Abigails, who, I noticed, had quite a long talk with the chief, accompanying their words with much gesticulation; after which they returned to my *château*, whither I presently followed them.

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CHAPTER XIV.

A family misunderstanding—I am put on my defence—Verdict "not guilty"—Out of the frying-pan into the fire—I turn weather-prophet—An awkward dilemma—A bag of teal—"Won, but not wooed"—My prophecy comes too true—Once more I am put on trial—Chopping logic with Mapaar—All's well that ends well—Farewell to Mapaar—In the forest—On the lions' track.

When I got to my hut I was surprised to find the place full of women, old Kert being the only man among them. Squatting down on my blankets in the midst of the assembly, I awaited the disclosure of the reason for this gathering, which I could see at a glance was convened in my honour—or at least in my interest. My thick-lipped Venus sat beside her mother, who opened the proceedings by a long and evidently exciting harangue, in which frequent reference was made, first to her daughter and then to myself. She finished by looking straight at me, and repeating three times the same words, and then sat down with the self-satisfied air of a junior counsel who thought he had evidently made a strong impression on the jury. Kert then proceeded to give me a version of the speech in his best Afrikander-Dutch, something after the following:—

"This is the mother of the wife whom the chief gave you. Her father was Mapaar's father; and their ancestors had been chiefs ever since the Bakalahari tribe was founded. Lo, her daughter is fair to see, and has been taught to obey her husband, to cook corn and melons,

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and to make coffee. What has she done that she has offended London's captain? Mapaar has honoured you by selecting this girl to be a wife to you during your stay, and has looked forward to having a son of London's great captain, to be brought up in his household in remembrance of your visit; but the white captain has spurned his bride, and has cast a dark cloud over her family. Will the great captain say why this thing should be?"

It required considerable self-command to restrain the laughter which the ludicrous side of this communication prompted; but the matter had its serious aspect too; for it was quite possible that, if I did not invent some satisfactory excuse, the natives would make my position very uncomfortable. At any rate, they had it in their power to do so. So placing restraint on my features, so that they displayed neither amusement nor anxiety, I quietly rose, as Kert sat down, and began:—

"The London captain is much pleased with the kindness of the great Bakalahari tribe, and thanks them for the honour they have done him."

Here I looked at Kert as a sign to him to translate what I said, sentence by sentence. I felt that if I made a long speech, and left it to him to interpret afterwards, he might possibly add or omit something on his own account, and that by proceeding sentence by sentence it would be more difficult for him to wander from the text, and easier for me to watch the effect of my words upon my audience, and modify their tenour accordingly. As I paused, therefore, Kert took up the parable, no doubt clothing my ideas in the appropriate idiom of the Bakalahari tongue, and giving them the necessary local colour without having the opportunity

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of altering their purport. He was quick at catching ideas, and I knew that the explanation I was about to give would not, after recent events, be without its effect on him as well as upon those for whom it was more particularly designed.

"The beautiful daughter of Mapaar's father is worthy of the best of husbands," I continued. "From the first moment I saw her, her bright eyes have haunted me; nor has her skill in cooking been unappreciated. Not because she is not worthy and beautiful is it that I have seemed in their eyes to neglect her, and to ignore the honour that Mapaar has done me in selecting her for my wife. But know you not, O people of Lihutitung, that London's great captain whom you thus honour cannot do always what he would wish? As the principal witch-doctor to England's great Queen, he is forbidden to marry. Were he to take the beautiful daughter of Balala as his wife, his power of foretelling good and evil would vanish. He dare not do so. Yet the pleasure of seeing her near him is very great, and he will be grieved if she does not continue to take her accustomed place and to honour him with her presence as before. They must pity me, not blame me, because I cannot treat her altogether as my wife."

I confess I could not extract much comfort from a study of the countenances of my audience as I solemnly gave utterance to this fiction. It was a lame excuse, my readers will no doubt think; but it was the best that suggested itself. And now, having offered my defence, I sat down and awaited the verdict of the jury of black matrons. For a few moments there was absolute silence, and then one of the old women jumped up and hastily left the hut. Still no one spoke, so I turned to Kert and whisperingly asked what was the

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next act in the drama; but before he could answer me Mapaar himself appeared, accompanied by two attendants and followed by the "foreman of the jury," who had just gone out. It was quite a case of the judge being summoned into court to receive the verdict of a locked-up jury, only that he had to hear my defence by proxy instead of direct from my own lips.

At last old Kert, was able to say to me, "Mapaar is quite satisfied; and ordains that the girl must remain with you. He thinks you have done him honour in allowing the girl to stay in your kraal, because the chief selected her for you."

"But," Mapaar asked, "why is not an English *pillyass* (witch-doctor), allowed to marry?"

"Because," I answered, "the pleasures and duties of married life would divert our attention from our studies, and we should fail in the greater duty to our Queen. We have many calculations to make, and many books to study, written by *pillyasses* who have gone before, and so our whole time is taken up."

And so, working upon their superstition, I managed, not only to gain my point, but to ingratiate myself still further with both Mapaar and his people, who all seemed to treat me with greater respect as "the Queen's first witch-doctor," than as "London's great captain."

I seized the opportunity of broaching the subject of my projected cattle ranche, in which Mapaar evinced great interest, and he undertook to grant me facilities for acquiring land in his territory whenever I might be ready to return and carry out my scheme.

But having thus escaped from one difficulty, I found myself unexpectedly landed in another. I had got off one horn of a dilemma only to be more completely

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impaled on the other; for nothing would now satisfy Mapaar but I must go with him to the kraal and tell him how the rains would be this season. Of course there was nothing for it but to consent; but I put off the evil hour by saying I must watch the stars and consult my books. He was immensely pleased, and, calling Black Beauty to him, gave her a long "talking to," the effect of which was visible in the pleasant smiles which once more encircled her expansive mouth.

All difficulties being thus smoothed away, it was time to think of taking the opportunity to "make tracks" before anything else happened. My oxen were rested, and there was no object in staying longer; so, after acting as clerk of the weather to-morrow—for I could not hope to escape that function—I would beg leave to depart, and ask for a guide to Lake N'gami, about fifteen or sixteen days' march from here. When I told Fritz—or "I'll-vatch-it," as we had nicknamed him after his favourite expression—of my intention, and ordered him to have everything in readiness for an early start, he exclaimed, "Dat is de best dings new vat I hear for long time. I'll vatch it dat we are ready all. I can pack in two ticks."

The signs of the weather had a more than usually direct interest for me now, so I devoted the next hour to working up the meteorology of South Africa, by means of an almanac published at Cape Town, from which it appeared that with the prevailing winds at this season, and the indication of the clouds, rain might be expected. Early next morning, after an anxious glance at the barometer, which had fallen steadily for the last two days, and was still going down, I paid my visit to Mapaar, in the new character

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of rain-doctor. The chief received me in private audience—old Kert alone being present, and at once asked if I had finished my studies. Taking out of my pocket a copy of "Old Parr's Almanac," I pretended to make a careful examination of the signs of the zodiac, and, pulling out my watch, wound it up and laid it on the ground. Its "tick-tick-tick" sounded quite distinctly in the silence of the hut; and feigning satisfaction at the result of my observations, I looked up, and told the chief that before the new moon was many days old he might expect rain and wind; that before to-morrow night there would be rain, either here or close by, and that game would be plentiful in the neighbourhood. In all this I felt I was not overstepping the limits of probability, for the hunters of yesterday had told Kert that they had seen plenty of "spoor," and that they were expecting the rains to fall, and game to be abundant in consequence.

Mapaar seemed very pleased, and promised to give me some melons and anything else I liked to have; so I seized the opportunity to thank him for all his kindness, and express regret that my duties would compel me to leave in the evening, saying that my oxen were ordered to be ready to-day, and that my waggons were already so full that I must not delay longer. I had to journey to Lake N'gami, to find the "little people," and get back to the sea in time to catch the steamship which was waiting for me to return to England. Then I made Kert describe a steamship, and tell him something about the ocean, in the hope of impressing him with the importance of my words; but it was all to no purpose, and he closed the interview by peremptorily saying, "You can leave

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the day after to-morrow, when your oxen and all will be ready."

Anxiety lest my weather forecasts should not turn out better than the majority of those of the Meteorological Department made me desirous of getting away towards N'gami; perhaps it was a parallel desire to see if my prognostications were correct that induced Mapaar to thwart me. It was hopeless to expect to leave without his consent, for, besides the risk of raising the country against us, Kert said no one would dare to bring us our oxen without orders from the chief. It looked and felt like rain; but if the next twenty-four hours did not bring a downpour, it might prove awkward for us, and I began to feel somewhat discouraged. When "I'll-vatch-it" heard the state of the case, he replied, with characteristic cheerfulness—

"Dat's all right; you vill vatch it; you vill take care of dat. Come, now, dat vill rain plenty much; get your gun and shoot dose duck on de vley; dey make de pot schmell nice."

It was better to be on the move than to let my "native hue of resolution" get "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;" so I mentally sentenced some of the ducks to death. A flock of them were swimming across the pool towards us; so hiding behind a bush I waited till they came within range, and gave them both barrels, the right one on the water, the left one in the air. Little Korap waded into the water after them, and set us laughing by his frantic efforts to release himself from the tenacious clay as he stuck at every step, but he secured them all—there were eleven altogether to the two shots. At a distance they had looked like the little diver, which is common on the vleys and pools throughout the country; but I was

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surprised to find that they were teal—and as fat as butter—a welcome addition to our larder.

That evening I spent in the society of my bride. "Won, but not wooed," thought I, as she welcomed me with bright smiles. She was quite pleasant and talkative; so, with Kert's assistance, I managed to extract a good deal of information from her.

The Bakalaharis, she told me, were descended from the Matabele Kaffirs and Vaalpens—the latter were a cross between the Bechuanas and the Kalahari Bushmen, while the former were originally descendants of the Zulus.

While we sat talking I heard large drops of rain pitter-patter on the thatched roof of the hut. My prophecy then was about to come true. Presently there was a vivid flash of lightning and a terrific crash of thunder, followed by a rush of wind which threatened to unroof the hut, and then down came the rain in torrents, putting to a severe test—which it unfortunately did not resist—the soundness of our thatch. I hardly knew whether more water came in through the roof or by way of the floor; but by morning it was ankle deep. As soon as day broke I was out. The whole plain was a lake, in the middle of which stood our waggons, up to the axles. Pulling off my trousers I waded across to them, and was surprised to find every one fast asleep. Luckily for them, they had dry beds to sleep in, which was more than the dwellers in huts had. Waking Lulu up, I told him to look out; and he was surprised, as well he might be, at the change which had come over the scene. He asked if he was on Mount Ararat, and if this waggon was the Ark, while me he christened Noah.

"Well, Noah!" he said, "it's fortunate that the

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rain has ceased, and that the waters are subsiding; for there is no more hay left for the elephants of the establishment, and the lions and tigers are getting so hungry that they have eaten all the sheep."

"And you have been so sound asleep that you could not take a photograph of the interesting scene."

"It's all very fine, Noah; but the cats have killed the dove, so you'd better come and see if you can make one of those dried vulture's-skins fly. Or perhaps you'll fly a kite."

When I had convinced him that I was not Noah—although getting aged; that he was in a waggon—not the ark; that he was in Africa—not Arabia; and that there had been no flood—only a thunderstorm, he came out with his trousers in his hand, followed by "I'll-vatch-it," also wearing his unmentionables in the same unconventional fashion, and saying,—

"Who told that some rain here never comes. You better vatch it; if dat chief's garden is drownded all, some trouble is sure."

And so we waded our watery way to my hut, where they were to breakfast with me—thus acknowledging their inferiority to the natives, for while they gave up all hope of lighting a fire, Black Beauty prepared a sumptuous repast of hot coffee and baked mealies.

About noon I had a summons to attend at Mapaar's kraal. Perhaps, as my prophecy had been so abundantly fulfilled, he was about to relent, and would let me go to-day instead of to-morrow. But he was in a very serious mood, evidently displeased, and I awaited with some anxiety Kert's version of his remarks. Instead of being pleased at the result of my scientific observations, he was vexed, because I had caused so much rain to fall at once; his plantations would be

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injured, and, if the rain continued, would be destroyed. Was I offended? What had he or his people done that I should thus punish him?

As I replied to this inquiry I thought of Lord Beaconsfield's saying about the "melancholy" nature of "explanations," but I did my best to make him understand that I had nothing to do with making the rain; all I could do was to foretell whether it was coming or not. It was a task of some difficulty to get the chief to understand the difference between foretelling the rain and causing it, and to believe that my power was limited to the former. But hoping to convince him, I added that even in my own country the villages were sometimes completely flooded, and houses washed away, and people drowned.

"Then," he asked angrily, "of what use is the *pillyass;* the Kalahari witch-doctors are better than you."

"Mapaar is a powerful chief; he can make his subjects obey him; but the people in England do not always heed the warnings of the *pillyass;* when they do so, they can prepare for the floods and protect themselves; but the *pillyass* cannot force them to do so, and if they do not attend to his warnings, then the floods come and wash them away. All the *pillyass* can do is to warn the people beforehand."

"Then why did not the *pillyass* warn Mapaar and his people yesterday. Did he wish to see our crops destroyed?"

The wily old chief was a better logician than I had given him credit for. He was determined to throw on me the responsibility for the calamity, and the best excuse I could offer only gave him better opportunity for putting me in the wrong. His last question was a

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"poser," but, determined to make a good fight of it, I appealed to him thus:—

"Mapaar is a powerful chief; but could Mapaar have removed his kraal and his plantations in half a day? It was only yesterday that I was asked to tell if the rains were coming, and could Mapaar have carried his gardens away to a dry place?

"Knowing that he could not do so, and knowing that the rain would not be heavy enough to wash away the huts, or to drown any of the people, it would have been wrong of me to alarm them. Besides, are not my own people worse off than Mapaar's? The water will soon fall away from the huts, but my waggons are deep in water. Yet I was not afraid to remain when the great chief told me yesterday to stay till to-morrow."

"True; the *pillyass* is right;" and then he asked me how my waggons were to be brought out of the water. I told him my people would inspan the oxen in the water, and draw them out easily, if the cattle could be sent at once. I would send my men over to the other side where the cattle were in order to show that the water was not deep enough to drown them.

I was anxious to get the waggons moved, for the ground was softening every hour, and the wheels would sink deeper and deeper into the mud if they were not quickly got out of the hollow; and great was my delight when Mapaar gave the word for the oxen to be brought across. He even condescended to watch the operation, looking on with much interest as "I'll-vatch-it," taking the lead, took the Bushmen with him, and drove the cattle across the watery plain, inspanned them, up to the bellies in water, and, with much shouting and smacking of whips, hauled the two Noah's

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arks into a dry place. The task was only just completed in time, for the ground, being a mixture of sand and clay, was soft enough to let the wheels sink in easily, and tenacious enough to hold them pretty fast when once beneath the surface. Had the waggons been left a few hours longer they would have remained a fixture there to the present day.

"All's well that ends well." Having proceeded so far, there was not much difficulty in persuading Mapaar to let us clear right out. He was very liberal in his presents of melons and fresh meat, and profuse in his expressions of regard to myself, begging me to come back by the same way before returning to the great English Queen, to whom he sent right royal and cousinly greetings, and voluntarily renewing his promise to grant me some of his land for my cattle ranche.

As a parting gift I took off a large Ulster, which I had put on just to show him how it was worn, and placed it upon his burly shoulders. It fitted him a little too much, but he strutted away as proud as a peacock, and retired to the seclusion of his mud palace in the best of spirits.

For the next two or three days we proceeded quietly, and without particular incident, over a tract of country which gradually became more of a forest and less of a prairie. The soil was less sandy and much firmer; in fact, altogether more like land and less like sea. The k'gung-trees grew in great clumps, thick enough to be called forest, but not so close together as in an American "forest primæval." It was pleasant to drive along under their shade, and the only drawback was the absence of water, for the pans, instead of being full of water as we had expected, contained only a small quantity of muddy fluid, which was all the poor beasts had to quench their thirst. We

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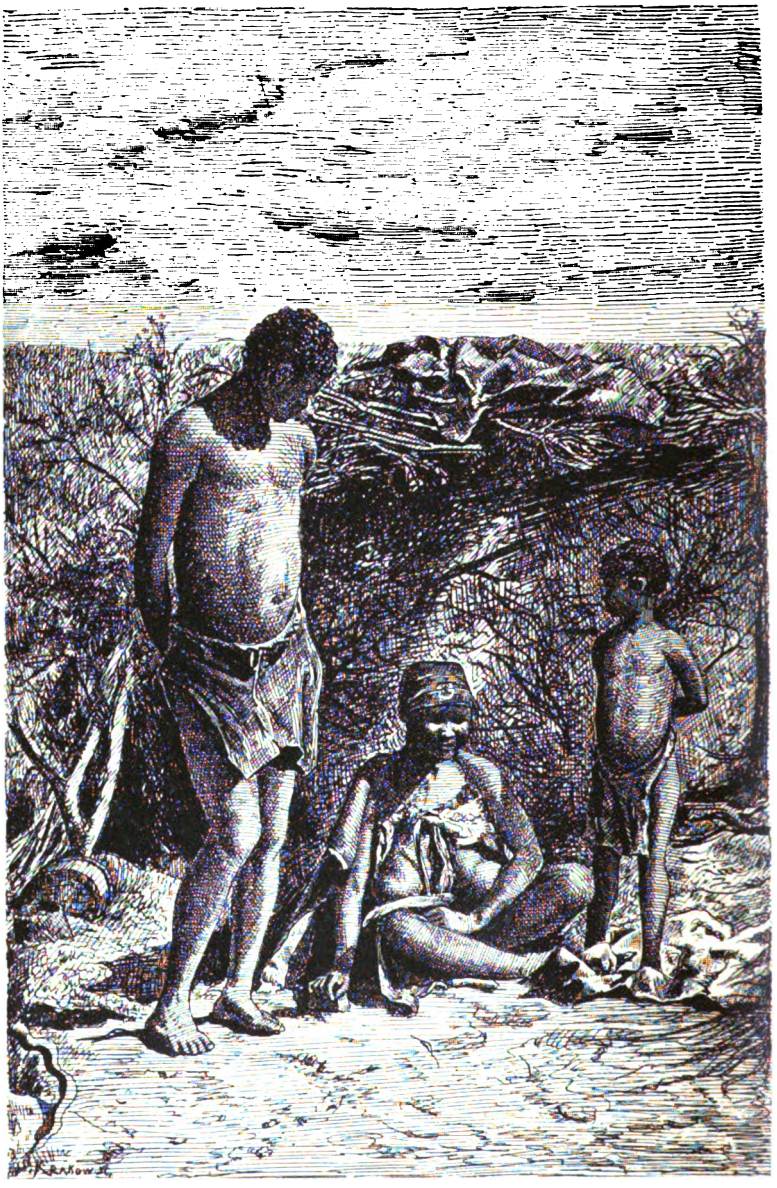

VAALPENS.

Page 237.

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ourselves were reduced to what at the Aquarium would be called a "nip"—only a temperance one. So we rested during the heat of the day, moving on only in the morning and evening. In the evening of the third day we arrived at a large salt-pan called Mururututlu (Big Giraffe). At one end we found that the water was not too brackish for the cattle to drink, so they were driven down two at a time, fastened with double straps, so that they might be held under control and prevented from drinking too much.

At one side of the pan a few Bakalahari hunters were camped, having come in search of ostriches. The pan is a favourite resort of these birds at certain seasons, when they are followed by the hunters. All the feathers used by the Bangwe-Ketsi, Baralong, Bamangwato, Bakalla, Batlapin, and Bakatla tribes are killed in this district. The hunters had not collected many feathers so far, but were anxious to trade. No doubt if I had brought plenty of shirts, tobacco, lead, knives, and other exchangeable articles, and could have stayed here a few weeks, I might have paid all the expenses of my journey from the produce of the ostrich feathers I could have collected.

After a day's rest—during which we kept the cattle in the grass, so that they might get thirsty and drink themselves full before starting—we moved on towards Koba pool, the next watering-place, distant about three days' march, meeting on the road a party of one of the nomadic tribes of Vaalpen, of a group of whom Lulu took a photograph. The natives told us we should find plenty of eland *en route*, and particularly cautioned us to be careful of our cattle, as lions were numerous. This made us "vatch it," as Fritz would have said, that the cattle and horses were well looked after while grazing, and that good fires were kept burning

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all night. We could sometimes hear the lions roaring close by, but not often, and I came to the conclusion that there could not be so many in the neighbourhood as we had been led to believe; for after our experience at "Lion's Surprise" I doubted the efficacy of fires in keeping the beasts off, although we religiously kept four blazing away every night, more out of deference to the opinions of the Bastards, who had the greatest belief in them. One morning, however, Dirk and Kert came and asked me to go and see the lions' spoor outside the camp, and there, sure enough, was quite a circle of their footprints as they had walked up and down outside the ring of fire. I wanted at once to go in pursuit, so as to make sure of them before they made up their mind to have a spring at the cattle; but Dirk thought discretion the better part of valour, and rejected the idea, saying, "Die leeouw ist rechte slim. If he lets us alone we will him."

"I'll-vatch-it" was game to go, but none of the others —except, of course, Lulu; but it was not safe for so small a party to go in search of a crowd of lions, for there could not have been less than half a dozen of them, judging by their spoor, so we gave up the idea of a lion-hunt in favour of stalking a small herd of eland we saw later on grazing in the distance.

When quite within range of the deer, creeping on our hands and knees round a small sandhill, "I'll-vatch-it," who was just in front of us, suddenly stopped, and cautiously but very energetically motioned us to keep back; then, hastily retreating himself, he came and whispered in my ear,—

"Dere on de sand two leeouw sleep fast. Ve can creep up close and vatch it dat we sure of dem make all right. All right, I myself vill dem fight."

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CHAPTER XV.

Surprising the lion asleep—A lucky shot—A delicious shower-bath—Milking the cows—The cattle drink to bursting-point—Catching a scorpion—A novel cure for a scorpion sting—Charged by a rhinoceros—Bombarding the baby—A sweet-smelling bug—The Kaffir water-melon—The haunt of the pigmies—The M'Kabba tribe—Truffles *à la* pigmy—Making poisoned arrows—A visit to their camp—The dwarfs promise to come with us to England.

It did not take long to settle our plan of operations. We were to crawl up two steep sandhills close together and stalk the sleeping brutes. I would fire first, and "Ill-vatch-it" put in his big shot immediately after. If they were not killed they would be sure to spring up in a fright and break away; perhaps they might chance to jump towards us, when we must be prepared for a flying shot.

There was not a breath of wind to stir the sultry air, so it mattered not on which side we approached our prey. There was no fear of cracking a twig or rustling the leaves of a tree, or rattling the stones under us, for the sandy space before us was clear of everything but grass. Peering at last through a thick tuft, there, within half a dozen yards of us, lay two of the tawny monarchs of the forest—a king and his queen. The lion, disdainful of everything, was lying on his back, with his head pointing straight towards us, and his legs sticking most ridiculously up in the air; his companion, trusting to his guardianship, was

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on her side, snuggling up against him. They were as still as death, save for the slight heaving of their sides in regular pulsation, as they breathed the slow, steady breath of deep sleep. I listened for a snort or snore, but—

> The beating of my own heart
> Was all the sound I heard,

as thump, thump, thump it throbbed against my ribs. Silently looking at each other to see that all was ready, we raised our rifles. I took a steady aim straight between the eyes of the sleeping king, and fired. As quick as lightning the lioness sprang into the air and ran for her life, "I'll-vatch-it" sending two shots after her and myself a third. We did not know whether they took effect, as the panic-stricken beast neither stopped nor wavered in her flight. Meanwhile the lion lay there, sleeping peacefully on. Rolling over on to his side, he gave a slight quiver, but never stirred again. That sleep was his last long sleep, from which there was no awakening. The ball had taken fatal effect in the brain, and no *coup de grâce* was necessary as he stretched his magnificent length on the ground.

Looking around for "I'll-vatch-it," I found he had vanished; but directly after spied him out giving chase in the direction in which the lioness had taken her flight; but the pursuit did not last long, and he soon came back short of breath, but full of fight, panting, "De cowards; I could dem mit mine hands kill." Our eland had of course fled; but we had a lion instead, which was preferable, as our larder was still well supplied with meat. As soon as the skin was off we inspanned and started off again, being anxious to get along as quickly as possible to the Khoba pan,

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for we were nearly out of water ourselves, and the cattle had been without for some days. Our Bakalahari guide said we might reach the pool that night by driving late, as it was not more than eight miles off; but "I'll-vatch-it" would not listen to such a proposal, saying the cattle would never stand so long a spell of work when they were so thirsty. "Dese tam scoundrel black, I never don't believe them; you see de oxen crazy some; I'll vatch dem! Ef so dey die water don't

CAMPING BY THE WAY.

come next day, I make a hole in his black soul case. He never come back no more as someding like dat."

As luck would have it, the rain came down in torrents that night. I was awakened by the deluge falling on the waggon-top, and, hearing voices outside, looked out and found Lulu and "I'll-vatch-it" catching the heaven-sent liquid in the large sail, one end of which was fastened to the waggon, while they held the opposite corners and directed a stream of water into the barrel,

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which they had placed beneath. Close by the two india-rubber carriage-rugs were laid in a hollow, on the ground, forming a couple of pools, from which the water was ladled out as they filled. I stripped and jumped out, and, while helping to catch the water, had the pleasure of a most delicious shower-bath. The torrent lasted four hours, during which we filled one barrel and two small kegs, the lazy Bastards and Bushmen and Kaffirs never stirring all the while, but not forgetting to ask for a drink of water the first thing in the morning. I was not much inclined to gratify them, for it was owing to their recklessness that we were so often in danger of being left altogether without water. To keep them from using it when there was no necessity, one would have to mount guard, gun in hand, over the water-vessels day and night.

As soon as it was light we let the poor oxen loose to graze on the wet grass, for in the absence of water they could only eat when the dew was on the ground, and they had consequently been on short commons since we left. All this time the cows had not been milked, for we could not expect them to bear milk for us when they had no water to drink and little to eat; but as Klas was now able to get about again and make himself useful, I took the opportunity of seeing if we could not get our dairy to work again, especially as I found what little milk there was being appropriated by two great "calves," almost big enough to be inspanned among the other cattle. The natives never think of weaning the calves, but let them suck, "to get the milk down." I asked Klas what he would do if the calf died or got lost. "The cow would be no good," he replied, "and you would have to dry her up;" and when I told him that we never let the calves suck after

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the first few days he could not make it out, but imagined that "your cow must be another sort of cow." So I had to teach him differently. The calves were condemned to find their own living apart from their mothers' apron-strings in future. I made a halter for them, and filling the nose-piece full of tacks, with the points outward, put them on, and let the overgrown babies have the run of their mothers that night, knowing that the maternal heel would beat more responsive than the heart to the prickly caresses of children thus armed. Next morning Klas tried to milk them, but as the milk did not come at once he pronounced it a failure. "Never mind," I said, "you sit there and milk away, even if it takes all day; and when you're tired I'll take a hand."

"What! can sieur milk the cow?" But before I could answer him the cow yielded to his importunities, and the little tin can was soon full.

"Ye es pitchig slim!" ("You are very clever!"), Klas exclaimed. "We would never have thought of that. We always dry our cows up when the calves go."

This is just a sample of the lazy habits of the people. I tried to improve the occasion by suggesting that if the farmers—some of whom had thousands of head of cattle, many of which must be milch-cows—would take the trouble to wean the calves, and save the milk and make butter of it, the colony would be all the richer—for butter is as scarce in South Africa as diamonds in England: all the answer I got was, "Ek tenk so, sieur; oonsere frauen lijk nie so viel werks maaken nie" ("Our women would not like so much work").

Klas was right. The whole population of South Africa—white, brown, or black—was born tired.

Notwithstanding their feed of wet grass, we had

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great difficulty in inspanning the oxen; but at last got away, Kert and the Kaffir tending the first waggon, Dirk and the Bushmen tending the loose stock, and "I'll-vatch-it" and Jan coming last with the second waggon, while I rode ahead on Lady Anna. We halted every little while, to give the cattle a rest, but did not outspan, as the men said they would stampede if they smelt the water, which they could do a long way off. After going on for about five hours in this way, the leading oxen of the first waggon refused to pull any further. When they were whipped, they replied by twisting round and breaking the yoke-skeys; then, with a plunge and a roar, snapped the strap that bound their heads together, and away they trotted, a little to the left of the direction we were taking. Then the others tried to follow suit; so seeing that it was useless to try and coerce them, we hastily unyoked them all, for fear of their smashing anything else, and left them to their own sweet wills. "They are after the water," said Kert; so, calling out to him and to Dirk to saddle the other horses and follow me, I rode after the liberated beasts. They made a straight track over the rolling sandhills and through the scattered k'gung-trees, here and there starting a herd of wildebeest and hartebeest, but scampering till, after about a two-hours' run, they came to a river-bed, in which lay a few pools of water.

Into these the thirsty creatures plunged; the water was only a few inches deep, but it was enough; they could slake their thirst and cool their weary feet. Directly afterwards I heard a shout behind me, and looking round saw Dirk and Kert beckoning to me. They had ridden hard after me, and struck the river a little higher up, where there was a large, deep pool, on

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the banks of which I quickly joined them. It was lucky the cattle, in their blind rush, had not hit this particular pit, for we should have had difficulty in restraining them from drinking too much, whereas in the shallower vleys they would not find much more than enough to slake their thirst. We determined, however, to whip them out on to the grass, to keep guard over them all night, and then let them have their fill before returning to the waggons in the morning. After a good feed, varied by several ineffectual efforts to return to the water, they lay down at last, and chewed the cud of contentment, and when the day dawned we gave them *carte-blanche* to drink as much as they could hold. And drink they did; it seemed as if they must burst; for they became distended like poisoned puppies, or like the india-rubber elephants that are inflated as toys for children, threatening to collapse as rapidly, if touched. However, they were none the worse for their "booze," and after giving them the whole day to enjoy themselves—though we had to fast ourselves all the time—we drove them slowly back to the waggons at night, inspanned early next morning, and reached the pool about noon.

We were now fifty miles from Ghanze, the next watering-place, unless we should be fortunate enough to find water *en route*. McCabe, when he came this way, was without water for nineteen days, finding none between Ghanze and Kang Pan. Sama must have been plentiful then; but there was no sama now; so, to make sure, Kert and Dirk rode forward to "spy out the land," while we stayed to rest the cattle for a couple of days. The Bushmen and women made a skerm, Jan cooked, and Lulu sketched, while "I'll-vatch-it" and I looked for insects and flowers. We never had

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an idle moment, always seeing something new; and what with shooting, hunting, skinning birds, preparing their skins, catching bugs, butterflies, snakes and lizards, and gathering seeds from such grasses and flowering plants as happened to be ripe, the first day passed away very quickly.

Among other specimens I caught a scorpion—one of the black-and-brown kind—which I put in a tin tobacco-box, where he lived for some months afterwards, being fed daily with grasshoppers and bugs. When they were thrown in he would rush on them, grab them with his claws, curl over the six-jointed elongation of his body, and quickly thrust his sting into them, so that in a few seconds they did not care whether they were eaten or not.

These scorpions are found all over Africa, and it is a common thing to see a group of bare-footed Bushmen, sitting around their camp fire, suddenly jump up as one of these reptiles suddenly makes his appearance, arching his long tail on his back, flourishing it about, and daring any one to tread on him. Its movements are not very quick, and it is soon killed. One night one of my Bushmen having stepped on a scorpion, ran to the waggon and asked me for the one in the box. I gave it to him, and having turned it out on the sand, and deliberately placing his foot close to it, he received the sting, and then taking a stick, replaced it in the box. This was his cure for the sting first received—a strange remedy, but as I was assured a certain one. The sting is very painful, causing a throbbing, shaking pain throughout the limbs, accompanied by nausea, but is never fatal. The usual remedy is to place a tight bandage above and below the place, and then to suck the wound.

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A Bastard once told me that along the Orange River nearly every stone has a scorpion under it, and that when working there he was stung so often that the wound had no effect on him, save the pain of the puncture, which was not of long duration. Liquid ammonia is good for the relief of the pain when first stung.

Kert and Dirk returned at night and reported having seen rhinoceros' spoor a day or two old: "where you find the old spoor you are sure to find the new;" so next morning we were up early, saddled our horses, and rode out to try and find the big game. In about an hour we came upon the fresh spoor of two rhinoceri —a big and a little one—leading towards the river-bed, no doubt going to some reedy pool in a quiet nook, known only to themselves. Another hour brought us to a muddy pool, surrounded by high reeds. "The nass-horns must surely be in there," said Kert; so, as these mail-clad, horned monsters are known to question the right of strangers to intrude upon their private retreats, we took the necessary precaution before invading their domains. Kert and Dirk rode on either side, "Ill-vatch-it" went to the back of the reeds, and Lady Anna, with me on her back, advanced to the front, pausing every moment to listen. She picked her steps very carefully, but at last the sand got too deep; she could not have turned round if the rhinoceros charged, but would have stuck fast; so turning her head the other way, I stood up in the saddle to take a survey, and then saw the lord of the pool lying in the mud, about fifty yards away, with his head turned from me, and apparently asleep. Raising my rifle I took steady aim at his shoulder and pulled. The brute paid very little attention to my salute, merely rising on his

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fore-feet and looking around to see what the matter was.

As he turned his head I fired again at his eye. In a moment he was on his feet, and made straight for me. The mare, who had not flinched at the gunfire, heard him, and before I could drop into the saddle jumped out from under me, sending me sprawling sideways into the mud. On came the rhinoceros, crashing through the reeds, nearly on top of me. I crouched down, making as little of myself visible as possible, and his head and fore-legs went over me, but his iron-clad hip struck my shoulder and grazed my face, taking the skin off it; but luckily he overlooked me in his blind rush after the mare. Half smothered as I was in the mud and reeds, I lay still for half a minute or so, to make sure he was far enough away not to hear me, and was crawling out, making as little noise as I could, for fear of attracting his attention, when I heard a gun go "bang," then another, then another. Reaching the edge of the reeds, I peered carefully out, and saw the proprietor of the pool chasing "I'll-vatch-it," with Lady Anna in front, and Kert and Dirk riding after him. Every now and then "I'll-vatch-it" turned—the only possible way of gaining on the rhinoceros—and as the infuriated brute swept round after him, Kert and Dirk let fly at him. My mare was running beside "I'll-vatch-it," so, as there was no chance of my joining the chase, I climbed a k'gung-tree that stood handy, hoping to get a shot from my coign of vantage. The whole party, however, were then out of range; but looking at the pool, I saw the small rhinoceros standing in the water, with its little ears pricked up listening. Turning my piece on him, I began bombarding him. But though I could hear every ball go

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pat against his head and side, he only threw his head up, or switched his tail, seeming to pay no more attention than if I was throwing peas at him. Having plenty of cartridges I fired away, trying to hit him in the eye, until the chamber of my Whitney-Kennedy, which held sixteen shots, was exhausted. Refilling the chamber, I was about to try again, when I heard a crashing noise the other side of me, and turning saw the old one coming back, apparently not much the worse for either hunting or being hunted. About two hundred yards in the rear were the three riders, following up and shouting out after me, asking whether I was alive or dead. I answered them by shooting at "old hornie," just as she—it was a lady—entered the reeds, which stopped her; then, smelling around for a moment, she made a dash at the reeds. "Too late, old woman; I'm up here," I said to myself, giving her another, to which she paid no attention, walking quietly into her residence, and being met by her child half-way.

While they were telling each other their grievances, I took the opportunity of exchanging my repeater for Kert's Martini-Henry, to which the old fellow thoughtfully fastened his handkerchief, full of cartridges, before handing it up to me. With this reinforcement I commenced the second attack on the little one. The first bullet struck it in the eye, and brought it to its knees; the second rolled it over; the dam making a rush towards me after each shot, and then returning to her young one.

When I called out to the others that the young one was down, the old cow came through the reeds with a rush, and made a dash at my tree, striking it with her forehead, and making every limb vibrate: then she tried to pull the tree down with her horn, ripping the

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bark into ribbons. I literally had to hang on with both hands to keep myself from being shaken out of the branches. She was bleeding in five or six places, and having exhausted her anger she retreated a bit, stood still, and looked up at me with her little sharp eye, not thirty feet from me. Now was my chance. This shot was more successful, striking her fair in the eye, which brought her to her knees. She was up in an instant, and charged the tree again, while "I'll-vatch-it" and Kert both fired at her, the bullets making a noise on her hide like throwing a lump of wet clay against a wall. She backed up to make another attack, but in so doing heeled over backwards, made a kick or two, and all was over.

Kert and the others were very careful in making their approach, fearing she was not quite dead, and I was down the tree and standing on her side before they came close. She had been hit in eighteen places, the Whitney-Kennedy rifle not sending one bullet through the skin, while the Martini-Henry bullets all penetrated. Three bullets were buried nearly an inch into the skull, but the shot that made the aperture for grim death to enter was one that struck behind the shoulder. Kert and Dirk opened her, and took out the heart and liver, which we cooked and ate, while the horses—Lady Anna having found her way back—were grazing. We could not remove the horn with our knives, so we saddled up and returned to the waggons, each of us carrying a piece of meat cut from the young calf.

I was in a sorry plight, smothered from head to heels in mud, and wet through. Fortunately we all took home sound skins (save for the bark being taken off my face), which was more than had at one time

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seemed likely. "I'll-vatch-it" said that he expected to be run down every minute, and that if Kert and Dirk had not succeeded in attracting the old cow's attention at last, she would have had her horn into his horse's belly.

Three days' easy going brought us to Ghanze without any notable incident. As we drove to the water the fore-wheel of my waggon crashed into a bush, which at once gave out a powerful and delicious perfume. Jumping down to examine the cause I plucked some leaves, but found they were scentless, as was also the stem of the plant. I could not make out where the pleasant odour came from till I touched a small beetle, when out came a puff stronger than ever. The little bug was an animated perfumery store, emitting this delicious scent whenever disturbed. I caught three of them, and put them into a perforated box, in which they lived for a week, the movement of the waggon affecting them sufficiently to make them give off their fragrance in such quantities as to keep the waggon perfumed like Rimmel's. When they died, the scent died with them.

After leaving Ghanze, the country began to get a little better watered, pools of water lying at frequent intervals all along the road towards Lake N'Gami: and the Kaffir water-melon became abundant, growing up spontaneously in the sand just as well as in old Mapaar's garden at Lihutitung, and quite superseding the sama. The natives store it by burying it in the sand, when it keeps good for a twelvemonth, or by cutting it into slices and drying it. When cooked it is much superior to the American pumpkin, and its flavour is not bad when eaten raw, the flesh, though somewhat hard and tough, being so much sweeter than the ordinary water-melon that I feel sure sugar might easily be

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made from it. Feeling confident that it would prove a valuable fodder in Europe and America, I collected several quarts of the seed to bring home with me.

Five days' travelling through a succession of sandy plains with frequent pools, and covered with the water-melon, growing in the greatest profusion, brought us close to Lake N'Gami. Suddenly little Korap called my attention to a group of little lairs—they could not be called huts—formed by bending over the tops of two tall bunches of grass, and twisting or bending them together so that they formed a kind of tower, with the bare sand as a floor. These, he said, formed the residences of people belonging to his tribe: and true enough, for as we came close we lighted upon quite a number of pigmies, each the counterpart of little Korap himself. But they disappeared suddenly, as if by magic, hiding themselves so completely behind the tufts of grass that we had the greatest difficulty in finding out their whereabouts. We camped close by, and sent Korap to reassure them, and try and get them to come and see us. But not even presents of pocket-handkerchiefs and pocket-knives would induce them to come near us that night, though they sent word that they would pay us a visit next day.

And so, early on the following morning, we found a group of seven or eight little brown beings carefully approaching our waggon—all stark naked. From their size they might be taken at a distance for children, but when they came closer their wrinkled faces —in feature closely resembling the Bushmen—showed that they were full-grown men and women. They were all tattooed on the cheeks, arms, and shoulders with short, straight marks of a blue colour; and all, down to the sucking babe, had a peculiar tribal mark

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in the amputation of the first joint of the little finger of each hand. At first they were very shy, but this wore off after a time, and in a few days the chief and his family became very friendly, allowing me to measure them, and answering and asking questions quite freely.

The tribe was called the M'Kabba. They are monogamous and the only tribe we had seen among whom circumcision is not practised. The chief was a little man, four feet one inch in height, with a wife just half an inch taller than himself, and his daughters both "favouring their father," in so far that they measured exactly the same as he did. One of the daughters had two little children and the other one. The children, with their tiny olive faces and large bright, sparkling eyes, are really quite pretty; and they would be so, but for the comical appearance they present as they go waddling about with their great projecting stomachs—like so many dwarf aldermen of the desert. The little chief was quite a big man in his own estimation, and would not let his subjects come near us, at any rate when he was there, so that they did not get so familiar with us; and for some days afterwards, on our suddenly coming against them—especially the younger members of the tribe—they would crouch down behind a hut and hide their faces in the sand. One day I saw a little girl peering at me through a bush, and on my going quickly round she threw herself on the sand and screamed away like a pig being killed.

These people seem to have fewer wants than any people I have ever met. When the mangatan or watermelons are plentiful, they live entirely on them, growing fat on the oleaginous seeds, which they pound up into a paste and then roast. When there are no mangatans they fall back on the sama, and, failing that,

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on roots, which the women gather, while the men go in search of small game. One especially favourite article of diet is found in the truffles, which grow in thousands, being easily found by a slight bulging in the sand. These truffles have exactly the same flavour as the French roots, and when roasted in the wood-ashes or baked in a sand-oven *à la* pigmy, they are nice; fried in fat they are delicious.

When hunting, the pigmies use bows and poisoned arrows. The poison is made from the juice of a bulb with a fan-shaped leaf, which when cut exudes a whitish-brown juice of the consistence of milk, which is boiled till it becomes quite thick and sticky, when the poison of the yellow cobra is added, or failing this, the juice alone is used, the poison in either case being mixed with a little clay and smeared just behind the barb of their arrows. If the arrow pierces the skin of an antelope far enough to reach the flesh, the animal will surely die in less than an hour.

Every portion of the animals killed by them is eaten, not even excluding the skin and the bones. We gave them a koodoo one day to see what they would do with it. They soon had it skinned, and the entrails were the first thing they ate; then came the flesh, which was partly eaten raw, or only slightly warmed; and after that the skin was roasted and eaten, and lastly the bones were broken fine with stones and devoured also. The gourmands did not rise from the feast until it was entirely consumed. Small as they were, they proved themselves quite the equals of the Bushmen in gourmandizing, their large stomachs—the most prominent feature in their bodies—protruding almost to bursting.

After a time we prevailed upon the chief to be

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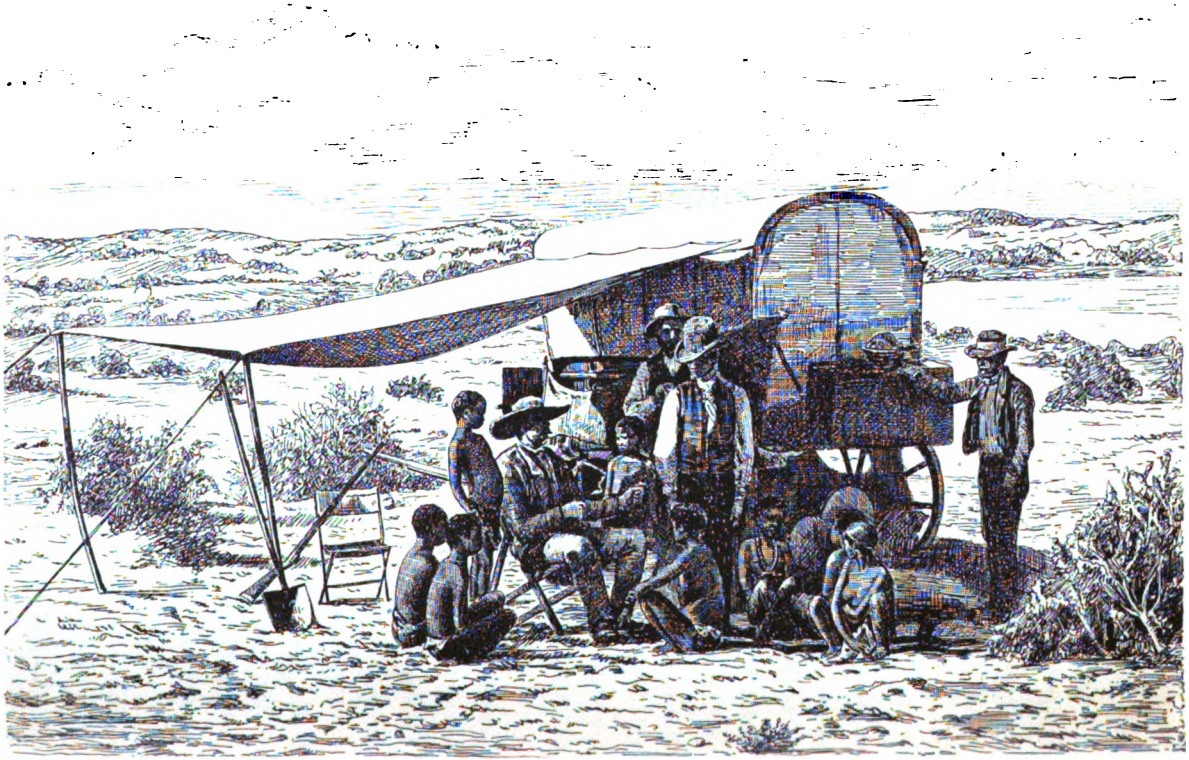

THE M'KARBA DWARFS.

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photographed along with his family. They came with their new handkerchiefs tied round their heads—for like all Africans they like their heads covered—and I succeeded in grouping them round the waggon while Lulu got the camera ready, with the result shown in the accompanying photograph. After the operation we distributed coffee and cracked-wheat among them. The latter they took kindly to, but the former they did not like. They would not touch either for fear of poison, till we ate and drank out of the same vessels.

The same evening we paid a return visit to their camp, where we found many of the people already asleep, curled up with their knees drawn up to their chins, beneath a bush or between two tufts of grass. Even the chief's dwelling consisted merely of a hole scooped out of the ground, with two branching bushes to form the roof—not a very substantial protection against the cool night air and the heavy rains; whilst against wild beasts their only protection was a series of little fires, round which they lie or squat, and into which they often tumble as they fall asleep, many of them having their hands and faces and even their stomachs burned, from the effects of nid-nid-nodding too long over the fire.

Now that confidence was fully established between us, it was time to open the question whether any of these interesting little people would be willing to come back with us to Europe. Korap himself was quite ready to do so, and so I left it to him to broach the subject. Presently a meeting was arranged to discuss the matter, and through the double intermediation of Kert and Korap I tried to explain where England was, and what they would see if they came here. They had

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often heard, they said, of the white men, and asked a great many questions about us and our country.

When we told them that our Queen was the greatest and richest in the world, and that she was going to take in their country, if she had not already done so, they could not understand that our "chief" was a woman, and asked if we could not find among us a man that could rule us! I tried to explain the English law of inheritance, but am afraid the explanation was lost on them. They were better able to understand us when we said they would be well fed and clothed (if they desired); but what impressed them more than anything else was the promise of a present of some guns when they returned. They had never seen any guns before, though they had heard of them, and they were delighted when we showed them their use. After a long palaver, old Kert winding up by telling them that he was chief of a tribe also, and had been to see the Queen, and had returned all safely, Lulu took out some bright-coloured handkerchiefs and tied them round the waists of the chief and his family, when they retired, saying they would "think about it."

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CHAPTER XVI.

An elephant-hunt—A beautiful tree—Some realistic music—In ambush for the elephants—Charged by the pachyderms—A wounded elephant doctoring himself—A convenient ladder—Kert has a narrow escape—We sup off elephant's feet—A happy release—Hunting the buffalo—More frightened than hurt—A grand cattle-grazing country—In luck again!—A herd of zebra—A fortune waiting to be caught—A puzzle for an antiquary—A substitute for potato—Evidence of the gradual elevation of the country—Curious customs of the Damaras.

As everything was going on satisfactorily, and I felt quite sure of being able to let Europe see this curious little race, I left Lulu and "I'll-vatch-it" in charge, and went with Klas, Dirk, and Kert on a trip to the lake, to see if we could not get an elephant. Starting early the next morning, and camping one night, we reached the lake the next day about ten, and inquiring of some natives, learned that some elephants had been seen the day before feeding at a large pool a little to the north. Engaging one of the natives as a guide to conduct us to where the elephants were last seen, we went after them, and towards evening came to a large marshy, reedy pool, covering some miles square, with plenty of large trees growing in and around it. We camped under some "anna" trees—immensely tall trees, with wide-spreading branches, bearing large fruit of a beautiful scarlet colour when opened, and no less delicious to the taste than attractive to the eye. The fruit is full of seeds, which are also edible.

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As the evening merged into the darkness of night the horses were secured to some of the smaller trees, in which we all roosted, so as to be ready to protect the horses as well as ourselves from the lions, whose roar we heard in the distance all night long, the jackals playing an accompaniment to Leo's deep-toned song. The whole performance suggested the idea of Wagner's music of the future—only that it was more easily understood. There could be no mistake that the chief item in the programme of the concert was the felines' sonata, with variations, accompanied by the performers' private jackal band. This wild operatic performance had a wakening effect on me, which lasted until old Sol's rays told me that it was too late to think of sleep then.

Having loosened the horses to feed, and drunk our cup of early coffee, we mounted and cautiously followed along the margin of the marshy ground, frequently making long détours to avoid the narrow *bayous* of water running out from the main pool.

While we were rounding one of these inlets, the guide motioned to us to stop, and then disappeared among the thick trees that fringed the muddy bank of the lagoon. As he did so, I noticed the unmistakable imprint of an elephant's foot in the mud: it was the first elephant's spoor I had met with in Africa, but being familiar with it from so often seeing the circus elephants taken to the river to drink in America, I at once recognized it. But wild elephants in their native retreats and tame elephants at a fair are two different things, and my heart beat with excitement at the thought of soon being brought face to face with a tusker. When the guide returned, I tried hard to read his face, but he was a stoic, and his imperturbable

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countenance gave no sign. At last, however, he reported that there was a herd of six elephants a little distance off, feeding down the wind, which luckily was blowing from them towards us. As the trees were thick and the undergrowth in some places impenetrable by a horse, he advised us to get as near as we could, and then, tying up our horses, wait near an open spot in the forest till the elephants came close enough for us to shoot. This plan would have this advantage, that while the elephants would give a warning of their approach, we should run no risk of alarming them, as we should if we attempted to move close up to them. Besides, our horses were unused to the sight of an elephant; so it would never do to trust to them; for they would either bolt, if a little distance away, or, if surprised at close quarters, would stand stock-still, in spite of spur and whip. So we advanced a few hundred yards till we came to the top of a small clearing, where the grass was nearly eight feet high, and, concealing ourselves behind a clump of trees, awaited the approach of the unsuspecting herd of pachyderms. I could not help feeling that it was a cowardly way of hunting them. Even in war, an ambuscade is anything but an exhibition of pluck. Open attack is more in my line. The monotony and uncertainty of waiting are always irksome to me, and my anxiety to look out and see if the elephants were coming annoyed the guide, who said, "Their eyes are sharper than yours, and if they see us first we shall never see them, for we cannot chase them through the mud and thicket."

Just then the wind wafted a rustling, crushing sound over the tall grass, making one's blood flow faster. The crashing of a branch had a visible effect on my companions' faces, lighting them up as suddenly as if

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a match had been struck in the dark. Then clear above the tramping, cracking, crushing noise of the elephants' irresistible progress through the bush, arose the shrill sound of their trumpeting as they blew their long noses. This made our horses uneasy, and it required all our efforts to keep them from bolting. The guide, who had climbed a tree, signalled that they were in the grass, feeding, to the right of us. I looked for their black backs; but though the grass was waving, they were invisible. In order to keep my mare from catching sight of them, as well as to shield her, I turned her round sideways, her head being behind the trunk of one tree, and her hind-quarters behind another that grew close to it, while I had a clear view in front, between the two stems. Gradually the waving of the grass came nearer and nearer; when not thirty yards from us they gave forth another loud shrill blast on their trumpets, my mare trembled under me, while Dirk's horse wheeled and bolted, the noise of which attracted the attention of the elephants, and I thought they would have turned tail; instead of which up went their trunks again, sending forth quite a chorus of metallic screams, and four of them came on in a line, so close that I could see they were all young elephants, with very small tusks. Klas fired and galloped away after Dirk, and then the two rearmost elephants turned and fled; those in front hesitated a moment and turned half round, giving Kert and me an opportunity of getting a shot each at the shoulders of two of them.

I fired four times at my elephant before he got away with two of his companions, while Kert only managed to shoot twice, the second cartridge-case jamming in the gun, so I put my fifth shot into his elephant, which was rapidly coming to close quarters. This pulled him

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up short, but catching sight of me he waved his trunk aloft, displaying a pair of short tusks, and charged straight at me. My mare refused to move, though I drove both spurs into her, but stood stock-still, shivering and snorting with fright; so firing a last shot at the charging elephant, I dismounted. As my feet touched the ground I felt his trunk slip over my head, and my rifle was pulled violently out of my hand, at the same moment a heavy thud shook the two trees in front of me. There was, luckily, not space between them for the elephant to get through, and he was brought up short in his mad rush by his head coming in contact with them, one on each ear. Snatching at the mare's bridle, I got her to move a few yards away, and remounted, when bang went Kert's gun. This seemed to bring the dazed elephant to his senses, for, looking back, I saw him tearing after me. Laying my head on the mare's neck, to keep clear of the branches, I urged her forward, but, once on the move, she seemed to know that safety lay in flight, and quickly showed her heels to our pursuer.

Bang went a gun, and right-about-face went the elephant, chock full of fight, charging in the direction of the sound, with me after him at full trot, till the mare stopped so suddenly that I was nearly thrown over her head, and began snorting once more. Then right in front was the pugnacious pachyderm, not four yards off, fighting for his life. But this time it was death he was in conflict with—lying on his side, and struggling in vain to get up. Seeing that he could not get the best of it, I did not interfere, but went in search of my gun, which I found trampled into the mud, but, luckily, not damaged. As I picked it up, some one called to me from the branches above, and I found it

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was the guide, who had discreetly kept in a safe place till all danger was past. On my motioning to him that the elephant was dead, he "climbed down," and pointing in the direction from which the elephants had originally come, made signs that another one was staggering about, wounded, a little way off. I tried to induce him to go with me in pursuit, but he adhered to the principle that discretion was the better part of valour, and declined. Starting off alone, I met Kert, and we rode on together for about half an hour, following the spoor of the wounded beast, and finding traces of his angry agony here and there in places where he had stopped to trample down the jungle, or to tear up any small trees and branches that came in his way. At last sounds of heavy snorting swept through the tangle of undergrowth—sounds like those which an elephant makes when blowing dust out of his trunk.

Motioning to Kert to make a détour and get to the other side of the elephant, I looked for a convenient tree overlooking the thicket, into which to climb and take a survey; but the lowest branches were too high to reach, and the trunks were all too big to clasp. Nature, however, who is always good to me, had provided a convenient ladder in the shape of a vine, which trailed down its long leaves from the branches of a forest giant till they reached close to the ground, and throwing my mare's reins over her head, "swarmed" up, and was soon high enough to see clear over the bushes, amid which stood the elephant, gathering up dirt with his trunk and applying it to a wound on his shoulder. It had evidently been pretty hard hit, for as he moved a step or two his right foreleg dragged. He was standing with his stern towards

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me, so resting my rifle on a convenient branch, I waited till he should swerve round and give me a chance of another shot at his shoulder. A long pause followed, during which the wounded beast continued to apply his surgical remedies, and then bang went the gun; away rushed the elephant; the smoke hung in the air for a moment, so that I could not see which way he went, but the crashing of the branches soon told clearly enough that he had gone off right away from me.

In a moment the forest echoes were awakened again; he had evidently gone from Scylla to Charybdis, and rushed into the arms of Kert. But his career was not checked, for I could still hear him crashing along in the distance; so, hastily slipping down, I mounted Lady Anna and followed in his wake. I had not gone far before I heard Kert shouting, "Sieur! Sieur!" evidently in distress. "Come quick!" Hurrying up, I found him in a sorry plight. "Look, my hand is skinned; my veldt schoon is torn off; my leg is smashed! I wonder I am not killed, like my horse!" and pointing over his shoulder, he showed me the body of the mare lying behind a tree. She was not quite dead, but so badly injured that we had to shoot her, to put her out of her misery. After making sure that Kert was not so badly hurt as he had imagined, I made him tell me how it all happened.

"You see, sieur, when you shot, the elephant came straight to me, limping along on three legs. The horse wouldn't move, and how I fired I don't know; I only know that the elephant drove us both against that tree, dragging me off, and crushing my leg, and smashing the mare, but never stopping a minute." The frightened brute, quite unlike his companion, had no pluck

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in him at all, but had rushed blindly away. However, it was useless to attempt to follow him single-handed, so taking the saddle off the dead mare and putting it on the living one, we made our way back to our first victim. Dirk and Klas and the Kaffir guide had summoned up courage to approach him, now he was dead, and had already cut off his feet, and were cooking them. We made our supper off them, and most delicious eating they were. In the morning we had the heart for breakfast, and that was voted delicious too. It is astonishing what a quantity of meat one can eat when living in the open air. An elephant's trotter would make a week's dinners in London, but here it was hardly too much for a single meal. If my appetite increased at this rate, I felt I should soon have to stop calling the Bushmen gluttons, and when I got back to London Messrs. Bertram and Roberts would be offering me a weekly sum to go and dine at somebody else's *table-d'hôte.*

In the morning, having cut out the elephant's tusks, we took up the trail of his wounded brother, and came to a muddy place, where there were marks of his footsteps having slipped, showing that he had had some difficulty in getting along on his three legs. Before long we came to the tripod himself, leaning against a tree about sixty yards off. He moved his ears as we approached, but did not make the slightest attempt to move, and no doubt welcomed our volley as a means of escape from his sufferings, for as we fired he rolled over and peaceably went to that bourne from which no elephant returneth.

His tusks were very small, only just showing through the lip, and were not worth the trouble of cutting out. But the animal would not be left to waste, for the

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Kaffir guide said he would go and fetch two or three families to camp near both the carcases, where they would remain until the bones had been picked clean. The natives, he said, were anxiously awaiting the time when the tuskers would congregate here, and be followed by hundreds of hunters, for then they would have as much elephant-meat as they liked, without any trouble.

Taking a short cut back towards the waggons, Kert's sharp eyes caught sight of some buffaloes standing in a shallow, reedy pool. The old Bushman was very careful to impress upon me the fact that a buffalo is a very dangerous animal to tackle, for when wounded an old bull will charge any one who comes within reach. So we "made a plan," as they say in Afrikander-Dutch. Dirk rode to the left, Kert to the right, and I took the centre. The forest was very open just here, and we could see one another, and at a given signal we all advanced, agreeing each to pick out his buffalo and fire at a hundred yards. Before we got within range the herd caught sight of us and bolted. I fired at an old bull, who dropped to his knees but recovered and ran towards Dirk. Kert fired, but failed to stop him, and on trotting forward to get another shot I saw the whole herd following their leader and galloping straight at Dirk. Hurrying to get within range again, a few thick bushes hid them from our view for a moment, when we heard Dirk fire, and directly after, on mounting a slight rise, saw one buffalo on the ground, and the rest scurrying off to the left. But where was Dirk?

"There he goes," shouted Kert, "and the old bull after him. But he is safe enough. His horse is fresh and the ground is open."

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"Come on; let us see the end of it," said I, and galloping forward, gained rapidly on the buffalo. Dirk was getting well clear of his pursuer when over rolled his horse, pitching him forward about ten feet over his head. The old bull was making straight for him when I jumped off my horse and fired, dropping the buffalo as it seemed to me right on top of Dirk. The buffalo had fallen with his nose against his chest, but with his backbone literally cut in two. He was powerless to do any harm, though had I missed him Dirk would have been done for. As it was he was only a bit dazed, and in a few minutes was able to help turn the buffalo into beef. After a dinner of meat, more nearly resembling the beef of old England than any I had eaten in South Africa, we turned our horses' heads once more towards the waggons, richer by a couple of "robes," and a good supply of fresh beef; crossing on our way the spoor of eland.

Lulu and "I'll-vatch-it," with the help of little Korap, had made great progress with the negotiations with the "little people," several of whom had agreed to accompany us, and were not only willing but anxious to visit the country of the "Great Queen," and joined our party without hesitation.

Staying a day or two to rest, I sent the Bushmen ahead to look for sama, or mangatan, or water: and on the third day they returned with the welcome intelligence that the mangatan was plentiful for three days' journey, and that there was a water-pan where we could camp while they went on in front once more reconnoitring. Not wishing to pass through Mapaar's country again, I struck out in a westerly direction, where the "little people" assured us that after a bit

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we should find water every few days, as the rains had passed over towards Damaraland. For four days we passed through undulating country, looking almost like an English corn district, covered as it was with a golden crop of Bushman grass, which was now ripening, and was almost equal to oats as fodder for the horses and cattle. The spaces between the bunches of grass were often literally covered with sama or water-melons, so that we did not trouble for water. Meat, too, was plentiful, as we got fresh eland and wildebeeste nearly every day. We often came across the spoor of lions, but did not see any of these animals, as the forest was getting thinner.

On the fifth day we altered our course to S.W. so as to strike Tunobis or Rietfontein, known to some as Ochimbunde. It was perhaps a little risky to diverge so far from the usual known route, but the cattle were in good condition—old Blomberg, the one that the lion had torn, was as fat as butter. We had plenty of food for man and beast, and I trusted to my usual good luck, which never deserted me. Lulu, indeed, now had so much faith in my lucky star that when discussing the probabilities of finding water in the pans spoken of by the "little people," he would say it did not matter whether there was water there now or not, for as soon as *he* (meaning me) got there they would be sure to be full; and certainly up to now we had never once been disappointed. And if we had been it would not have mattered much to me; as far as I was personally concerned it would not make much difference whether I turned to dust in the Kalahari or whether my bones went to swell the dividends of a cemetery company.

Coming to a wide grassy flat, with a clump of k'gung-trees in the middle, the "little people" said

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that on the other side of the trees we should find a number of hollow stones, which, after rain, were full of water, and took some weeks to dry up. So outspanning the cattle to give them a rest, we saddled the horses and sallied forth to reconnoitre. The spot looked "just over there" when we started; but it took two hours on a jog-trot before we got among the trees, which we entered very carefully, having seen the spoor of giraffe on the way. But instead of the "long necks," we found a herd of zebras—the real zebras, not Burchells—and not far from them half a dozen quaggas. The striped beauties seemed quite surprised at the unwonted intrusion, and stood still, staring in amazement, until the reports of three rifles awoke them to a sense of their danger, and off they darted, leaving one of their number behind. Curiously enough we had all fired at the same zebra, who fell dead in his tracks, and then, turning to the quaggas, I wounded one, which Dirk and Klas finished.

Leaving Dirk and Klas to skin them, I rode after the zebras, and in the open prairie beyond the k'gung-trees, saw them all standing on a gentle rise watching my approach, close to another herd, of whose presence, however, they took not the slightest notice, while the others seemed equally to ignore them. They looked so beautiful that I had not the heart to kill any more, remembering how scarce they were getting; and as I watched them I thought of Cross's advertisement I had seen in a Cape paper offering 75*l.* for a live true zebra. There stood in front of me about 1000*l.* worth—provided they could have been captured; but even with that important proviso satisfied, I doubt whether much profit would have been left by the time they had been taken to Cape Town, to say nothing of Liverpool.

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So bidding them good-bye, I left the 1000*l.* on the sands for somebody else to realize, and went in search of the hollow rocks where the water was to be found.

The stones were about a quarter of a mile off, looking in the distance like large rocks of granite awaiting the construction of some imposing public building. As we approached I felt certain they must have been brought here at some remote period by human hands. Where could they have come from? Had they ever been actually laid together, or if not, why had the workmen not completed their obvious task? There was no stone of any kind for hundreds of miles; nothing but sand; possibly, however, they had been quarried from the bed-rock underlying the sand, which I struck whenever digging to very great depth for water. There might have been a time when the country hereabouts was free from sand; but, if so, these stones must have been piled up high on others, or they would have got smothered too. At any rate they had lain exposed to the weather for a long, long time, for their colour was a shiny black, save where chips had been newly broken off, when the colour was grey.

Dismounting on a long flat stone with a rounded top, I threw the bridle over the horse's head, and let him graze while I examined the puzzle more closely. All but a few had sides as square as the cut stones of the St. Denis quarries. Here was one tapering to a slightly rounded point, further on were twenty, six feet thick and fifteen feet long, lying side by side about a foot apart, just as if they had just been unloaded. On the upper side of each of them an oval basin was hollowed out to a depth of from one to three feet, all filled, or partly filled with water. Lying down, I

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drank some, and found it deliciously cool and of good flavour. There was a little sediment at the bottom; but only in one case was there any vegetable growth.

By the time I returned Klas and Dirk had skinned the zebra and quagga, and cut up the meat and were already regaling themselves on the entrails. Sending them back for the waggons, I tasted some of the quagga and zebra meat; the former was very tender and of delicious flavour—much superior to the zebra.

OUR LAUNDRY ON THE DESERT.

We stayed here two days, filling up all our water-vessels, and washing our linen, and bathing. The horses enjoyed putting their noses into these ready-made drinking-troughs; but the cattle refused to drink. Dirk and Klas said they would not take water while the sama was plentiful.

I asked "I'll-vatch-it" what was his opinion of the origin of the stones. His reply was characteristic: "Vat matter dot how com dis stone dare? How can dot

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difference make to some people. Vat make me interest de most is dey got vater; and ve know dot mit rain dot vater come dare."

"I'll-vatch-it's" philosophy was certainly of a practical kind. To get water here was certainly a boon to be thankful for. My star was still in the ascendant; but, given rain and hollow rocks to hold it, there could hardly fail to be a store of water for the traveller who happened to be passing at the time, and that was our good fortune.

The Bushmen and the "little people" found plenty of roots; one a very large one, as long as one's arm, and much thicker, full of strong fibres which would make good rope, and between the fibres a kind of starchy substance which looked and tasted very much like arrowroot. The Bushmen called it *likah*. When roasted it was not a bad substitute for potato. There was another root—also very good eating—of a bulbous nature, producing a flower very like a crocus, but without a stem, growing close to the ground between several long leaves. From this point to Tunobis, a two days' journey, we saw no game at all, unless a sand-tortoise comes under that head. Tunobis is on an elevated plateau of sand, standing 3460 feet above sea-level, or nearly ten feet higher than when Galton was here in 1851. I find the whole country is rising; and this I take it is the cause of Lake N'Gami getting gradually shallower. The natives think it is the lack of rainfall, but even after this year's heavy rainfall they admit that it is not a bit deeper than before.

At Tunobis we found a number of Damaras with their cattle, watering at a running spring. These people are very different from either the Kaffirs or the desert dwellers. They are a powerfully-built, stalwart

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race, jet-black, looking more like the negro, but with the splendid *physique* of the Zulus.

Some of the customs of these people are very peculiar. When any one is very ill, and in their belief past life, the son, or next nearest relation, has to help the dying person "shuffle off this mortal coil" by strangling him. Funerals and weddings are celebrated much in the same fashion by plenty of dancing and feasting. On each occasion the eldest son has to act the part of butcher to the cattle that are destined to form the feast; and this he does in a very curious manner. Throwing the ox to the ground, the young man prevents the animal from using its legs, placing his knee on the horn that is nearest to the ground, and then with both hands grasps the windpipe, and never lets go till the beast's struggles are terminated by suffocation. The women are not allowed to witness this proceeding, nor are they permitted to partake of the flesh. I heard no talk of "women's rights" among these people, the weaker sex accepting its position of inferiority very submissively. Polygamy is the order of the day, the men having as many wives as they can purchase. Their king, Kamahamahero, sets the example of taking a new young wife every year, choosing only from the families of chiefs. He had recently married his twenty-second. Kamahamahero is five feet eleven inches high, powerfully-built, and as black as jet; about forty-eight years old. He is advised and controlled by Robert Lewis, through whose recommendation he is arming as fast as he can, to protect his people from the constant predatory incursions of the Namaqua Hottentots. The Damaras are celebrated cattle-breeders, the chief's herd alone numbering some 20,000.

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CHAPTER XVII.

Through the lion's territory—From Ochimbunde to Kerses—Another way of making thick milk—An Englishman *incog.*—A city of huts—Dirk Verlander, the chief of the Bastards—In a quandary—How Verlander became "captain"—Time reckoning and money equivalents among the Bastards—Bastard customs—A cattle ranche—Góing to meetin'—Master-beggars—The private secretary—We start on a hunting expedition—A twilight reverie—Trapping a jackal.

From Tunobis we struck out in a southerly direction, picking our way between trees and steep sandhills. There was no road: so we took it turn and turn about to ride ahead of the waggons in pairs, one exploring the route, while the other rode back to conduct the waggons. We had to exercise great caution, the country being infested with lions, so that we had to make a skerm every night. This gave us a great deal of work, but we generally managed to economize time by riding on in front, and selecting a suitable spot, where noi-bushes were in abundance. Game was plentiful, the sand being covered with the tracks of giraffes, eland, hartebeeste, gems-bok, and wildebeeste; but we had to leave all but the last unpursued, the wildebeeste belying their name by being less wild than any of the others, and remaining till we got close enough to get a shot at them without difficulty.

In two days we arrived at Sandfontein, where we gave the oxen a day's rest, and replenished our water-

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vessels; and the day after leaving there, while riding ahead, I found a waggon-track that looked like having been used pretty frequently at one time, but was now nearly overgrown with grass. When the waggons came up I pointed it out to "I'll-vatch-it," who replied, "All right; we know dot you somedings find; you have dot lucky too plenty."

Following the track, we came in three days to a place called Anerougas. There are two places of this name, the one where we now are, on the Nosob River; the other 160 miles distant, further south. Here we found water; and also met with some of the Namaqua Hottentots, who are always making raids into Damara-land, robbing the inhabitants of their cattle and taking their children into captivity.

Three days later we reached Kerses, where an Englishman resided with his coloured wife—at least, she had children who called him father; and further proof I did not ask for. She was disposed to be very friendly, and brought us supplies of thick milk, for which I gave her in exchange some coffee and tobacco. The latter she pounded fine, and adding a few ashes, used it as snuff.

The thick milk was made by putting milk fresh from the cow into a skin bag, which, as soon as fermentation set in, was shaken frequently. When the milk had arrived at the proper consistency, which could be told by the sound, a small peg was pulled out from one corner and the whey allowed to escape. The bag with the "curds" was then trampled under foot until every drop of liquid was squeezed out, and nothing left but a thick white mass, which was either eaten as it was, or mixed with the fresh evening's milk. Lulu tasted this novel kind of "cream cheese," which he pronounced

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delicious, resembling the *fromage à la crême* we used to get in Paris. At first I used a little sugar to correct the slightly sour taste, but soon got to like it *à la* Bastard.

Milk, in one form or another, was the principal food of these people, and the Englishman—whose name I suppress at his personal request—thoroughly enjoyed our cracked wheat when he came to sup with us one night. He was a highly educated man, of good family, and his conversation made me wonder how he could consent to live in this out-of-the-way corner of the world.

We were four days' journey distant from the head-quarters of Dirk Verlander, the self-appointed chief of the Bastards, and Kert proposed to go on in advance and prepare him for our arrival. So while he went on ahead we stayed here a day or two exchanging hospitalities with our English friend, who, on the eve of our departure, killed a two-year-old, and insisted on our accepting half of it.

It was on Sunday morning that we reached Mier—a collection of huts formed of bent sticks, covered with anything that came handy, pitched on a bare stony patch, whose only recommendation is the absence of sand. In the centre of a stone kraal stands a stone house, thatched, and plastered with clay, which is the residence of the chief, upon whom we called as soon as we had outspanned on the camping-ground, which Kert had laid out near a fresh-water pit dug out of the solid rock. We were met at the gate by a tall, well-built, dark-brown mulatto, with large, handsome eyes, which twinkled as he spoke, and his face bearing a perpetual smile, the parted lips displaying a row of white, even teeth; but a cunning expression underlying

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his good looks. He was in his shirt-sleeves, the original colour of which could only be guessed at; his legs hidden by a pair of corduroy trousers, and a pair of *veldt schoons* partly covered his feet. On his fingers he wore several hoops of silver and brass. Such was Dirk Verlander, who conducted us inside the house, where stools were placed for our accommodation.

In one corner of the square room stood a narrow wooden bedstead covered with stiff bullock-hides. The

DIRK VERLANDER.

opposite corner was filled with blue-painted boxes designed to form the seats of a waggon. In the third corner stood some ox-yokes, while near the door hung a pail of water with a cup attached. Lying in the middle of the cow-dung floor was a heap of spring-bok skins, on which some children and young goats were playing together. On the beams of the roof sat perched several fowls. The room was nearly full of men, while women of all shades of colour, but all with their faces blackened with a paste made from a dark-coloured stone, which

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they pound to powder and mix with grease, kept passing in and out; some wearing an old dress but barefooted, others with skirts, shoes, and even bonnets. They all walked in a lazy, loose, careless manner, so different from the erect carriage of the Bushwomen servants, who came in now and then, all as lithe and as upright as reeds, wearing only a skin around their waists, and so exposing their well-shaped breasts, firm and round, and in strong contrast with the flabby flaccidity of the others.

Old Verlander, addressing me as "London's chief," —he had been well coached by Kert beforehand— expressed curiosity to know why I had been exploring the Kalahari, and for what purpose Mier was taken into my route, but before I could answer he asked me for "the letter."

"The letter!" What could he mean? and I looked to Kert for an explanation. Verlander, seeing my hesitation, added,—

"We wish to see the letter from the Cape Government that Kert yonder says you have brought. I have called all my *groot-men* together according to Kert's request."

Kert not coming to my relief, I boldly said I had no letter to him in particular, and that I had not told Kert that I wished the council called together. This brought Kert to his feet, saying that I had a letter which had been read to the magistrates and *groot-men* at Griqua-town and at Kheis, and who had given me whatever I wanted as soon as they saw it! and that he had asked Verlander to call the council together in order that I might tell them what I had heard in Cape Town, how that the Cape Government had told me they had no jurisdiction north of the Orange River.

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"Now," he continued, addressing Verlander, "you will hear the truth. There stands the man who will tell you all; London's captain, my sieur, who takes a coloured man by the hand. In his eyes we are men. In other white men's eyes we are dogs. There stands the man who is come to buy land; and you are the man who can sell it to him."

Then he sat down.

All eyes were now turned on me; Kert still pointing to me and repeating, "There is the man, and I brought him here."

It was rather an awkward position for me; but to hesitate would be a serious matter. Taking out Colonel Schermbrücker's open letter, I read it aloud in my best Dutch, making it read that all "*groot-men*" as well as "Commissioners," must render me all the assistance that lay in their power. Having finished the letter, I went on to say that I had been assured that if I bought any property from Verlander or any other chief in an honest, straightforward manner, my title to it would be recognized when the Government came to annex the country. When I added that it was probable Korannaland would be annexed before Parliament was closed, they seemed very pleased, and I concluded by asking whether they would sell me a tract of land if I saw any to suit me.

Verlander himself replied, saying he would be pleased to render me any assistance, but that at present he would not sell me any land, as he was in treaty for the sale of the whole country.

But some of my readers may ask, not unnaturally, what right had Verlander—a Boer, to judge by his name—to dispose of the country? What territory had he over which to exercise these sovereign rights?

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And I may as well answer that question, though to do so involves a little bit of history, which, however, those who do not like it may skip. The original stock from whence the present race of Bastards is sprung came from Cape Colony, where they were slaves,[1] held in bondage by the first Dutch settlers.

Some of these slaves having made their escape, were protected by the tribes among whom they took refuge; but instead of appreciating their protectors' hospitality, they too often repaid it with treachery, using their superior knowledge and cunning to overthrow the chiefs and take their places. This is what Jan Africander did with the Namaqua Hottentots, after having obtained permission for himself and others to reside with them.

Dirk Verlander was one of Jan's "great-men," as they are called, and was sent eastward to establish Jan's power amongst the Bushmen on the Kalahari; but having obtained leave from the Bushmen to settle at Anerougas, he made a pit there, and never again returned, although frequently sent for. At last, Jan Africander himself came after him, and gave him notice to "trek;" but by this time some of the Bastards had joined Verlander, who paid no attention to the order. The notice to quit having been repeated, he replied that he could not at present, owing to the drought; and by the time he received the third notice he had prepared himself for resistance, and sent word back that he would go when Jan Africander *forced* him

[1] These slaves were called "yungs" or "boys," and to this day the Bastards when asked what they are will say, "*Ek es ein yung*" (I am a yung, or boy), just as the term or its English equivalent is still used by the colonials, so that a black, no matter how old he may be, speaking of his employer, will say, "I am Mr. So-and-So's boy."

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to, and not before. War was declared, ending in the defeat of Jan Africander and his party, and they were forced to trek into the Veldtschoonträgers country, leaving Verlander in possession. The latter was at once recognized as chief, under the title of "Captain of the Emigrant Bastards." No doubt the word "Bastard" was originally employed in its literal sense, these people being the progeny of the Bush-women and their Dutch masters. But in course of time marriage customs were introduced, and they called their children *schoon Bastards*, or clean Bastards, thus originating the type or race of people known as "The Bastards."

Each year Verlander's little settlement was augmented by a few more half-breeds—coming across the Orange River from the colony. They lived principally by hunting on the Kalahari, and, as they increased in number, were of necessity obliged to "expand." The Verlanders, always taking the lead, went farther and farther north, finding water by digging pits. Traders followed them up, and fortunes were at one time made in the feather trade. But those days have gone by. Prices then were from 40*l.* to 70*l.* per pound, while to-day they are as low as from 5*l.* to 10*l.* "Cape smoke" was the principal article of barter.

The Bastard is very improvident, and will purchase anything if you will give him credit; he nearly always anticipates his hunting profits by buying on credit from the trader more stuff than his whole season's skins and feathers would be worth.

There is a kind of law established, which is administered by field-cornets, appointed by Verlander. Certain grounds are also allotted to each person, for

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which a tax, or rent, is paid to the "Captain." As there is no money in the country, the price of everything is spoken of as so many goats or sheep, a yearling calf, a two-year-old, a large trek ox, or a small trek ox. Time is reckoned by pointing to the sky and saying when the sun stands so or so, you must be here or there. Distance is reckoned after a still more vague system. "Just over there" is half an hour; "near by" is three hours on horseback or seven hours by ox-waggon; "there!" with the "r" rolled out long, is any great distance; "an hour" is equivalent to about six miles on horseback.

The Bastards, like their teachers the Boers, are an indolent, lazy lot, who like to smoke, drink coffee, eat, and talk. Their principal aim in life soars no higher than to fill their ever-hungry stomachs. Sooner than labour a little, by cutting and storing hay, they will allow it to be wasted, and see their cattle perish every few years from starvation. Like the Boers, they make good pioneers, but they must be eradicated before the country can be prosperous. They affect to be Christians, and the fact that they have but one legitimate wife apiece may be counted as one step towards civilization. But they rejoice in many black proxies, and at all their camps you may see them all sitting around one fire, with their children of all colours, and no shame is attached to the fact that the father of the Bushman girl's children is her master.

They are all poor, both in cattle and sheep, when, under the same circumstances, they might be rich, if they only possessed a little more energy. Even when they see other people more energetic than themselves prosper around them, they cannot bestir themselves to follow their example. For example, one Rautenbach, a white

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trader, came amongst them to hunt, and hired a great many Bushmen as hunters. He not only made money in trading and hunting, but in letting Verlander have credit to the amount of about 1500*l.*, more or less. To pay this, Verlander, with the acquiescence of his *groot-men*, gave him a piece of land running from near Mier to about sixty miles south, and as far west into the sands as he could go until he reached the border-line of Bechuanaland. In this territory Rautenbach dug wells, built dams to store water in rainy seasons against the dry, erected a substantial stone house, and started cattle-ranching in a small way. In a few years his herd increased to 1500 head, and now all the Bastards look at him with envy, blaming Verlander for giving him the best land, where all the water is. One of them afterwards went so far as to tell me "Verlander ought to have kept all the land for his own people, and not paid the thieving Jew trader anything." He forgot that Rautenbach's property, previously to his sinking wells on it, had no more value than any of the surrounding lands, any of which might be made just as valuable by the exercise of the same amount of energy. He is the only white man that has anchored his ship on this sea of grass, and commenced cattle-farming in the proper way; but he is bound to succeed, as others will do who set to work in the same way.

After this long parenthesis, we will return to the *pow-wow*.

Just as Verlander finished, a bell hanging on a pole outside was rung. The chief rose at once, all his *groot-men* following suit, and taking their chairs to the end of the room, motioning me to do the same. This I did, wondering what was to follow next; and we had hardly seated ourselves when a troop of women and

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children, of all sizes and colours, slovenly-looking creatures, with dirty faces, came and squatted on the floor opposite to us, those most nearly in a state of nature taking a back seat.

Then came in an old man, with sore, red eyes, dressed in rags of many colours, his coat reminding me of the one that Joseph's brothers dipped in blood. Under his arm he carried a book, which I recognized as the Bible; and then it dawned upon me that we were going to have a "meetin'," as they call it in America.

Service was opened by the sore-eyed old mulatto uttering a long prayer, in which he asked his Maker for all the good things He possessed, and promised to be good in return, and to keep Him as his only God. This was on a par with all the dealings of these people —trying to get the best of it in everything. Then a psalm was sung, the key being pitched by a big, fat daughter of Verlander's. As the others took up the singing, one very beautiful voice sounded clear above them all. To my surprise, it came from one of the naked Bushwomen, who kept them all from getting off into another tune with another metre and in a different key. Then the old sinner with the sore optics preached a sermon, spitting it out in the most guttural Dutch he could cough up. But his congregation did not seem to pay much attention, most of them amusing themselves by watching half a dozen goats that were playing about near the door. The sermon being over, another hymn was sung, and the meeting concluded with prayer, in which the blear-eyed old hypocrite again reminded the Lord of his willingness to accept any loose blessings that might be on hand at that moment.

Without losing any time Verlander rose and motioned

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us to follow him. As we walked out, "I'll-vatch-it" whispered in my ear, "You vatch it; dat von old hypocrite, he don't make me humbug mit dem churches. He make drunk mit my prandy plenty Sundays before, after his church is finish, you'll vatch it."

And we had to "vatch it" pretty closely. Leading the way straight to our waggon, Verlander asked to look at our guns, was very pleased at the action of the repeater, cast very covetous eyes on our high-coloured blankets, and ended by asking for a little coffee and sugar, which we gave him. His *groot-men* begged for everything they saw. Tobacco they did not think it worth while to ask for, but reached over and took the pouch and helped themselves, as a matter of course. They were past-masters in the art of begging; they would first examine an article and then praise it; then say with the utmost coolness, "As maister has plenty, I should like this as my present, es hom bleef." If we had not made our negatives very plain and very strong, our waggons would have been sacked in an hour. They never left us five minutes in peace. Even when we ate, they would surround us, and watch every mouthful, begging us to allow them to "prue die licher koss" ("taste the delicious food"). One or two pretended to be anxious to buy, offering most ridiculous prices; but when told that we were not traders, their begging proclivities prevailed, and they fell to expressing their admiration of everything they wanted in the most extravagant terms.

In the evening we were invited to go over to the chief's house to drink thick milk. Here we met a white man, who introduced himself to us by the name of Halliburton, saying he was Verlander's private secretary—a long, lean, lanky person, of uncertain gait,

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whose little, greyish-blue, unsteady eye indicated cunning, and whose general appearance did not inspire me with confidence at first sight. Perhaps our mistrust was mutual, for at first he suspected me of having a design on the country, saying that hunting was not a sufficient reason for my being in Africa, and suggesting that I was from some government, perhaps the German, whose agents they were expecting to make overtures for the sale of the country. I denied the soft impeachment in such a way as to convince such a suspicious nature that his surmise was correct. With a knowing wink he said he understood, and went on to say that it would be as well for us to have a little private conversation at his house—a reed hut close by, which he said was his temporary residence—before saying anything to Verlander. "It is as well for men of the world to understand one another," he significantly added. Verlander seemed uneasy at our confabulation, and asked what we were talking about. Halliburton answered at once, to prevent me from doing so, by saying he was only asking my opinion about the Transvaal war. By-and-by the conversation drifted from that to hunting. Of this the Verlanders had probably had greater experience than anybody in the country, and Nimrod himself would have to tell some very tall stories before he could beat their anecdotes of their encounters with lions and other wild beasts.

Verlander's description of the quantity of game to be found within ten days' journey by ox-waggon from here exceeded anything we had seen. He said that even so recently as three years ago lions were killed within a mile of his house; and before that they used to be very plentiful. Two of his sons were out hunting

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on the veldt, and as his veldt-cornet was going out to fetch in what skins and feathers they had collected, he invited us to accompany him, and we gladly accepted the offer. But we reckoned without our host. For our acceptance was made the excuse for a renewal of the begging nuisance. First Verlander asked me to leave him half our sugar and coffee, considerately adding that his sons would repay me if we wanted more. But I did not like trusting to such chances, and declined. Then he fixed his covetous eyes on our big zinc pail, saying it would be useful to him to dip water from the dam. This, however, was more useful to us than almost anything else we possessed, particularly for preparing the sama-water; so invaluable indeed was it, that the veldt-cornet himself urged us not on any account to part with it, so we had no hesitation in declining this request too.

At last, just as we were fairly off, the "private secretary" put in a modest claim for tollage. "It was customary," he said, "for any one passing through or hunting over Verlander's veldt to make him a present."

Blackmailing was quite a fine art among these people, who carried it to even greater extremes than the black potentates. But to keep things smooth I offered him a nice carriage clock, showing him how to wind it up and set the alarm.

Taking it up in his hand, he turned it over very gingerly, and then said, "What do we know about such things? I won't have it. 'Die oud Kerl moet mij von die roohrs gie" ("The old chap must give me one of the guns").

"He not vant much," "Ill-vatch-it" said in an undertone. "Drive away quick, or he vill die vaggon vant. I'll vatch it he don't a gun get."

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Diplomatizing I said, "But you can't expect a man to give you a gun when he is just starting on a hunt."

"Why not?" he replied. "You have six. However, you can take them with you, and when you return I will take mine."

I did not say much, but I thought all the more, and he looked upon the gun as already his property. "Not if I know it," I thought. But it would be time enough to discuss that question when he attempted to make his claim good; and I gave the word to start. Still the importunate blackmailer was not to be baulked. He must have one of the blankets for his wife; so, as we had more than we wanted, I gave him one, and at last got rid of him.

For three days we passed over the everlasting sand-dunes, till we reached the dry bed of the Nosob River, up which we went, the road being as smooth and hard as any of the productions of McAdam's genius. In two hours we came to the junction of the Oup River with the Nosob, where Rautenbach had dug a well 100 feet deep. The cornet, however, warned us against drinking the water, which he said was very salt and poisonous, the last time his people used it they nearly died, their heads getting dreadfully swollen; the oxen were the same, their heads swelling so that they could not see. No doubt this was the result of copper in the water.

Pressing on we soon came into the sama belt, and the thirsty cattle were set loose to feed. Passing eagerly from vine to vine they soon had their fill, and in an hour's time were lying down or chewing the cud of contentment, listening to the chirp of the giant cricket, or the warbling of the golden pali, while the

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little mere-cat popped his head from his underground chamber, and gazed wonderingly at the gorged strangers; and the mighty vulture soaring high aloft till it looked like a speck in the heavens passed over in search of food, no doubt regretfully noting, even from that giddy height, that the sleek skins of our cattle held out no hope of affording them a supper for some time to come.

All was peaceful, as the sinking sun, like a great ball of red fire, laid itself to rest in its western bed, kissing the blushing foreheads of the grey mountains, and hanging out its curtains of rose-pink and crimson as it disappeared from view. Then the silver light of the moon was welcomed by the saturnine laugh of the hyena, as he slunk about beneath the shadow of a camel-tree; while the "yaa" of the jackal, and the answering cry of the ah,[2] aroused the lion from his siesta, and his mighty roar rolled over the sea of soft sand and waving grass.

The poetry of the scene was rudely disturbed by the prosaic announcement that "supper's ready," and the majesty of humanity surveying the infinite variety of nature's works was at once brought down to the level of the "beasts that perish," by the necessity, common to all, of eating and drinking.

Besides the members of our own party, there were Jan, the veldt cornet, and his son-in-law (*swaar*), Pete Bok and his nephew Klas, who were distinguished as "hom" (uncle) and "nef" (nephew), Andreas Bok, and an assortment of Bushmen servants.

Three days later we reached the Ki Ki mountains,

[2] A small dark-brown jackal, quite distinct from the large jackal with the characteristic white and black stripes down its back.

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where we left the river, and struck off to the east across the sand. Four days more brought us to the edge of the k'gung forest, where we camped under some large trees between two sandhills, near some old huts, the remains of an old Kattea village. Some of the best of these old huts were taken possession of by the Bushmen, while the others came in handy for firewood.

At night we set some steel traps that we had brought from Mier, baiting them with pieces of gemsbok flesh, and making a trail up to them by dragging the entrails of a stein-bok in a circle of nearly a mile in diameter. No sooner had darkness set in than we heard the barking of the jackals all round us, and shortly after supper Kert exclaimed, "Hark! there's a jackal caught; you can tell by his bark."

My unpractised ears could not detect any difference, but Dirk and one of the Bushmen left the fire, and in half an hour came back with a large jackal, which they soon skinned, and, although they had eaten a hearty supper not an hour before, the whole party set to work to cut up and roast the carcase, which they devoured as ravenously as if they had fasted for a week.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Defying the poison-berries—A ride after a giraffe—A tall beast—Hints on giraffe hunting—Charming away the lions and vultures—A desert delicacy—I spend a night alone in a tree—A descent of vultures in force—A monster vulture—Nocturnal visitors—The "lion's scavenger" *versus* "lion's provider"—The hyena enters a *caveat*—In dream-land—A curious bird—Three lions appear on the scene—Photographing Leo at home—A foolhardy experiment—Camera *versus* gun—Death of the king.

NEXT morning we were up before daybreak, to find that the Bushmen had visited the traps again and brought in four ahs. As soon as these were skinned, seven of us were mounted and riding northwards over the grassy sandhills, under the broad camel-trees, through thick clumps of dark-green k'gung-trees, by "raisin-bushes," heavily laden with ripe berries, and every now and then passing a tree completely covered with a creeping vine, full of bunches of large fruit about the size of a plum, ranging in colour from bright green to a rich scarlet. Very tempting the bunches looked, and finding that the ripe fruits were broken open, having been picked by birds, I was about to eat one when Kert called out that it was *gift*, i.e. poisonous. Thinking, however, that what the birds ate, and apparently enjoyed, wouldn't do me much harm I disregarded the warning and tasted the forbidden fruit. In flavour it much resembled the tomato, and the juice was so pleasant and cooling that I plucked another.

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"No, Sieur!" cried Kert, and his companions cast distrustful eyes upon me, expecting to see me die there and then. "If you eat them you will be poisoned again, and we shall be told it is our fault."

But I laughed at their fears, and proved that their knowledge was not always to be relied upon, by surviving the risk, and eating more. However, we soon had something more exciting to think of; for we crossed the track of an old bull giraffe—huge foot-prints over a foot long and nearly nine inches broad. We took up this spoor at a jog-trot, and rode along in silence. At every step the spoor became fresher, and in an hour we came to the place where he had evidently lain down to sleep the night before. Just beyond here the cornet dismounted, and taking up a handful of wet sand said, in a whisper, "It is warm: we are close upon him; keep a sharp look-out ahead;" then jumping into his saddle again he rode on a few yards ahead.

"Gallop! he has seen or scented us," now came the cry; and away we all went pell-mell through the long grass, heeding not the attempts of the thorn-bushes to keep us back, although they ripped a piece out of our clothes every time they got hold. There goes Jan, the cornet's nephew, flying through the air, but his mare is out of sight! No time to stop, for the great, tall, cream-coloured stallion now comes into full view as he turns round a thorn-bush and zigzags up a steep sandy slope. Now it's my turn to come to grief; my mare plunges into an aard-vark's hole, ploughing up the sand with her nose, but gallantly struggles up again, without spilling me, and continues as if nothing had happened. Reaching the top of the slope, we come in sight of the long-necked beauty:

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his head towering above the trees about a hundred yards in front, and bearing off to our right, straight across a clear open space. "Don't shoot," said the cornet. "Ride round him and turn him." The object was to make him carry his own carcase towards the waggons, to save us the trouble of doing so; but though the cornet and Jan rode on in front and headed him off, he refused to change his course and actually followed them. Our horses were blown, and if the giraffe did not put about we should lose him. The cornet's pace was visibly slackening, but the giraffe showed no sign of giving in. "He won't turn," cried Dirk; "we shall have to shoot him or lose him;" and as he spoke the stilted creature came alongside the cornet, who sprang to the ground and fired. The crack of my rifle was almost simultaneous with his; yet still the frightened animal strode on. But only for a few yards. Stopping suddenly, he turned round and began pawing the ground, his long neck swaying to and fro. Then shot after shot was fired at him, and as each bullet took effect he stamped and kicked more desperately. Dismounting, I ran forward to get a nearer view. There was despair in his drooping eye, and a look which seemed to say, "What harm have I ever done to you?" and as we all clustered round him in his last agony it seemed a shame that nobody attempted to give him the *coup-de-grâce*. Turning to the cornet, I asked, "Why not go up and shoot him in the head, and put him out of his misery?" But the only answer he made was to grasp me by the arm and shout to the rest, "Look out, or he will be on you!" Looking up, I saw the crazy creature swinging his head about, his long neck looking like the giant Jacomama, the South American anaconda,

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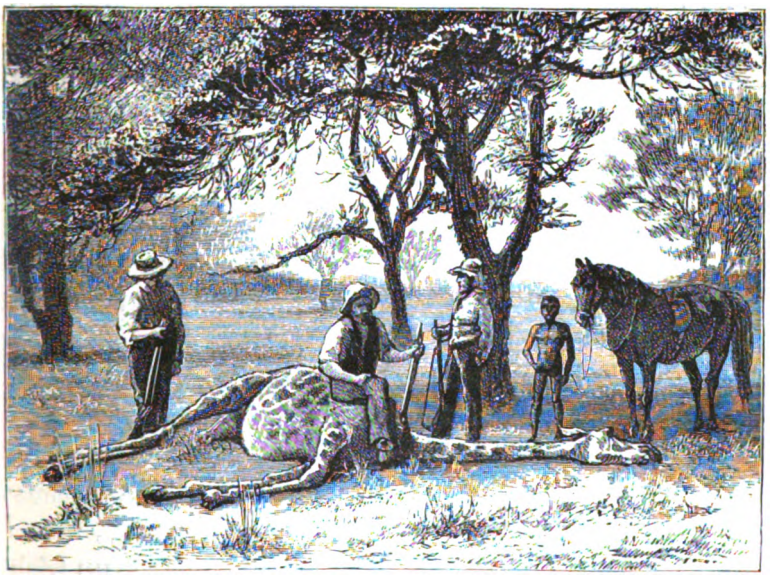
which I had seen on my trip up the Amazon, as it fairly whirled through the air, forming huge circles, while he made mad plunges in his desperate efforts to keep his legs under his body. We all sprang back just in time to avoid him as he came down with a crash, pitching forward, and striking his head and shoulders in the sand with a thud that fairly shook the ground. Then with a kick he stretched himself out full length as dead as a stone.



DEATH OF THE GIRAFFE.

From the root of the tail to the shoulder he measured 6 feet 1 inch; from the shoulder to the tip of the nose 10 feet 1½ inches; total, 16 feet 2½ inches. His height from the fore-hoof to the shoulder was 11 feet and half an inch; and as he lay there his shoulder came level to the third button of my waistcoat. His tongue was 15 inches long, and he would be able to eat from the branches of a tree 22 feet above the ground.

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"What do you think he will weigh, Jan?" I asked.

"Can't say, Sieur; we know nothing about such things; but when he is cut up it will take four men to load his hind-legs, and two will have all they can do to lift his hind-legs up to skin him. Anyway, he will make a heap of biltong."

I bargained for his tail and his head, the latter remarkable for a row of large bumps just below the horns; and while they were busy preparing to skin him I went to look after the horses. Dirk was unsaddling Lady Anna. "She is *gedan* (done up)," he remarked." "Two more giraffes like that and her bones will be picked by the *aas-vogels*. What a pity the boss is so heavy, she will hardly carry him back to camp."

"Yes, she stuck to it bravely;" then, looking at my watch, I added, "it is two hours and twenty minutes since we struck the camel's spoor, and at least half that has been hard riding."

"Yah!" interposed the veldt-cornet, "it's always hard on the horses if the camel sees or smells them at a distance. If you come right on them by surprise they seem to get bewildered, and after swinging their long necks around and switching their little tail, heave ahead with a rolling gait that a horse can keep up with easily, and yet they generally tire out and stand at bay in an hour and a half. But when they get scent of you first they are off at once, and run so fast that by the time you come up with them your horses are used up, and if you don't manage to shoot them they get away. When you are riding after them, if you don't press them too hard when they slacken their speed, you can drive them along for miles, right up to your waggons, and even this, if we could have changed his course

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and our horses had been fit, would have trotted along quietly to camp like an ox. However, you will see it yet; for by the spoor we crossed while chasing this one we shall find plenty more."

"Shall we see any bigger than this?" I asked.

"Yah, Sieur; this is a *zwart bont* (dark spotted); they are thicker and heavier than the *witte bont* (white spots), but not so long."

By this time the Bushmen, having disembowelled the giraffe, were busy cutting a lot of bushes with which to cover the animal, as we should have to leave him here and bring the waggons to him, as he declined to go to the waggons. Soon the carcase was invisible, and a piece of paper was put on the top to frighten the lions and vultures away, while a little gunpowder was sprinkled round to serve a similar office in regard to the jackals, which are said to dislike the smell of powder.

"Hi!" shouted the veldt-cornet to some Bushmen who were busy over a fire, "is that meat cooked? If so, bring some to the Sieur, and let him taste giraffe flesh."

They gave me a piece of the liver, along with a lump of light yellow fat, the flavour of which was very similar to the smell of the animal. Being very hungry, I soon demolished it, and then Dirk asked me how I liked it.

"The liver was very good, Dirk."

"Oh, the liver is not worth eating; it is too lean. I mean the piece of gut; that we call the greatest delicacy; it is what we prize most in all game, and is always cooked and eaten before anything else."

"Well, Dirk, what was it?"

"It is the *laste derms* (last gut). We did not tell

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you, as most white people will not eat it if they know what it is; and we did so wish you to taste it."

"How did you manage to clean it? there is no water here to wash it, eh, Dirk?"

"We never think of washing it. We just turn it inside out, and if anything is inside it falls down; then we throw it on the coals, and when cooked it is fit for a queen to eat. I hope Sieur won't be sick now he knows what it is!"

"Come, Sieur," said Jan, "we are ready to saddle. It's a long way, and we must reach the camp before dark, as lions are plenty hereabouts."

Dirk brought Lady Anna for me to buckle the girth —one thing I never allowed any one else to do for me—but the poor thing moped along with her head down, and I could see that to carry me, rifle, and saddle some eighteen miles would completely finish her; so calling Jan, I said, "You take the mare with you back to the waggons, and I will stay here until you return for the meat. There will be no danger, as I will pass the night in that big tree. See the limbs have grown out purposely to form a good seat high up."

"No, no! Sieur moet nie hier blei" ("Sieur must not stay here"); "we cannot leave you here, such a thing is never done; we always ride back to the waggons. Many things might happen. You might fall asleep, and tumble out of the tree. Besides, we must look for fresh spoor for the next chase while riding home."

"Jan, you have heard what I said. The others have also heard what you have said, which will exonerate you. That tree will be my roost to-night. The mare cannot carry me, and birds and animals may come to the feast—which will give me an opportunity

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to watch them, and secure some specimens. Lions I am not afraid of. Livingstone and other travellers spent many a night alone under much worse conditions, so be off, and send the waggon back as soon as you can."

"If the Sieur will do so foolish a thing, then one of us must stay with him."

"No! none of you care to stay; therefore I shall remain alone. Mount and ride away, as it is getting late."

"I don't feel right leaving the Sieur here, so many things might happen; the waggon might break down, and you would have nothing to eat, and no blankets. Come, Sieur, you ride my horse, I'll ride my nephew's, and he can walk."

"I am much obliged to you for taking so much interest in me, but here I stay just the same."

"No, Sieur, please come along; the little Sieur Lulu would kill me if I came to the camp without you."

"Well, Jan, I never thought of that danger—he certainly might—but you must risk it." And they reluctantly rode away, and were soon out of sight.

Fastening a long strap to my gun, and tying the other end round my arm, I climbed up the big tree bear-fashion, and was soon perched on a big branch, my feet resting on one below, while my back was supported by a third. Hauling up my gun, I tied one of the straps around a branch above me, letting it hang down just far enough to rest my gun in the looped end, the butt resting on the limb that I sat on. Another strap was fastened to the branch behind me, passed under my arm, and made fast at the other end, so that I should have no fear of falling out of bed.

I was now quite safe from everything excepting the

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leopard—or "tiger," as they call it in South Africa—which, however, did not often frequent the k'gung. Sitting up there, like a sailor in a crow's-nest, I could watch my fire, where there were some sama roasting for my morning's drink, or gaze up into the clear blue sky—a soft, cloudless expanse, with a light so clear that every object stood out quite distinct.

Soon my thoughts drifted thousands of miles away, and I wondered what had taken place in the living, moving, world far away beyond those dreamy sandhills. Friends might be dead, governments might have changed, or empires might have been lost, in the last six months. No one can imagine what it is to be without the morning paper until he has been buried half a year like us, in the sand. Now that I had time to think of such things, how I longed for the *Daily Telegraph!* Until now I had forgotten all the luxuries of civilization, for something new and exciting was always taking place, and if a lion were to appear now how quickly my day-dream would be dispelled! Suddenly I perceive a little speck high up in the air, not larger than a fly; away to the right is another; beyond it a third, and soon there are a dozen visible. As they approach slowly they gradually get bigger and bigger, until they are near enough for me to see they are vultures. Down swoop three or four, within a hundred yards of me, closing up their huge wings as they alight on a tree. They have already spied out from afar the dead giraffe. After a few minutes' quiet survey, they make a descent in force upon the heap of brushwood, till the air seems full of their great, heavy, lumbering wings. First one and then another, paying no attention to the paper which was to frighten them, begins to drag away the grass and smaller bushes, till

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the head is nearly uncovered. One more venturesome than the rest makes a dive right under the pile of bushes and emerges with some of the entrails in his mouth, dragging a long string of it out, till another makes a rush at him, when he stops short and begins to devour as much as he can before his friends deprive him of the fruits of his enterprise. Then his example is followed by others, till the ground is covered with a swarm of the dark-brown gluttons, pulling and tugging at the long leathery strips, flitting from point to point, snatching at the daintiest morsels, and engaging in a general scrimmage. There was one, however, who appeared to be the leader of the flock, and whenever he stalked up in a stately manner towards any *bonne-bouche* that took his fancy, he was invariably allowed to have undisputed possession of it. It was he who had opened the attack on the body of the giraffe. So long as they confined their depredations to the offal, I was content to watch them in peace; but presently his vultureship renewed his efforts to get at the head. Taking hold of a branch with his powerful hooked beak, he tugged backwards till it was clear, the rest looking silently on. This he repeated five or six times, until the head was quite exposed, and then jumping on the horns, he started to pull the eyes out.

That was too much for me. This band of marauders had gone far enough. If the head was to go to London, my rights must be at once asserted. The chief must be warned that he was trespassing on my property before it was too late. Thinking he would hear the gun better than he would me, as its voice was louder and was more penetrating than mine, I sent a leaden message to the effect that he was poaching on my preserves. The vulture chief was so surprised to hear

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this that he fainted away, and the rest of his tribe took to their wings and gave up possession at once. Such a loud voice they had never heard before; it so frightened them they let their chief lie where he fell, without coming to see what was the matter with him. Under the circumstances I thought I had better go to his assistance, and ascertain why he had fainted; so lowering down first my gun and then myself I went, and found him dead. Catching him by the tip of the wing, I pulled it out to my height. What a monster! Stretching his wings out, I measured from tip to tip across the back, and found he was ten feet six inches. What a grand old gourmandizer! He little thought half an hour ago that his anticipations of a feast would be brought to such an untimely end.

What puzzled me most was the rapidity with which these birds gathered round their prey. When I first saw them they were the tiniest specks in the sky: how far off they were before that, it is impossible to say; and yet they had come straight for the dead giraffe—covered up as it was, and looking just like any ordinary bush. It was impossible for them to have scented the blood of the giraffe from afar. The only conclusion I could come to was that they must have a kind of telescopic adjustment of the eye—far exceeding the power of the human eye—enabling them to distinguish objects at distances which to us seem quite marvellous.

Covering up the giraffe, I climbed the tree again, and, dragging the vulture as well as my gun up after me by my strap, spent the rest of the daylight skinning the musky-smelling biped. The others sailed around at a safe distance, seeming loth to leave so much good food; but none ventured to come so near again, after seeing the fate of their leader.

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As the twilight succeeded the day, ushering in a lovely warm evening, the bat set out on his awkward flight, looking like a great brown leaf, wafted by the breeze, as he struggled through the air; and the chirping *heiki* crawled forth in search of a dainty supper of sleeping flies and beetles.

Sir John Lubbock he
Would give his Queen bee
And his ants to see
What I saw up that tree.

Soon the jackals began to bark, notifying their intention to eat the giraffe. Here I may as well take the opportunity to correct the erroneous belief that the jackal is the "lion's provider," and all students of natural history may distinctly understand that the prowling jackal never provides for the lion in any way. He is always seen and heard where the lions are, well knowing that Leo will provide him a supper from the crumbs of his table—in fact, he is everywhere in the country. His cry can be heard wherever your waggons stop, if only for an hour, just as if he knew that where man is there is food. No doubt those that I now hear have followed our horses' spoor, well knowing there is a supper for them where we halt.

As soon as darkness set in these night marauders got to quarrelling with one another for the choice bits that the vultures had not consumed. These they were welcome to; but such fare would not content them, and I could hear them pulling at the brush covering the giraffe itself, and where the vultures failed they might succeed, under cover of the darkness. I was just going to shoot, in the hope of frightening them away,

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when there came through the night air another and different kind of bark—a sort of long-drawn-out howl. How often have I heard that sound! It was the cry of the large spotted hyena, with thick neck, and jaws powerful enough to crush any bone. The ordinary dinner for a cage of performing hyenas that I once had consisted of the bones left by the lions, tigers, and leopards, which were thrown to the hyenas, who rarely ever left a morsel. They are such cannibals that when one of their number is hurt, or has a sore place, the rest will eat him up alive, if he is not separated from them.

When the jackals heard the hyena put in a claim to a portion of the food, they snarled out an angry answer, as much as to say, "You have come too soon, we have not picked the bones for you yet. Sit down, and we will soon have them ready." But the disagreeable intruder would have none of such politeness, and insisted on eating at the first table. The idea of supping with such a great vulgar brute as the hyena so disgusted the jackals that they went and sat down under a bush, and looked on with silent contempt. The moon now gave light sufficient to enable me to see them as they sat eyeing one another, while the hyena, looking askance as he stealthily approached, and taking a good sniff before he tasted, began to help himself. Thinking it was high time to interfere, and prevent any further unpleasantness between old acquaintances, I took up my speaking-trumpet, and spoke one loud, leaden, heavy, convincing word, which struck the hyena as very much to the point. He howled an apology, and ran away into the tall grass, accompanied by the discontented jackals, who were so frightened that they did not return until just before day.

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The rest of the night was as still as death; not a sound was to be heard; not a leaf stirred; all nature was hushed in sleep. For hours I sat through the quiet night-watches, gazing at the moon as she silently traced a silvery arch across the dark vault of heaven; counting the stars as they passed by in majestic procession, and listening for some sound to break the monotony of the solemn silence, till at last my own senses fell under the same spell. Finding my eyelids beginning to grow heavy, I made an effort to fasten myself securely in my "narrow bed," and then resigned myself to the soothing influences of Momus and Morpheus, and my spirit was soon carried off to that boundless country called Dreamland. Whilst roaming, fancy-free, from one pleasant spot to another in that vast land, I suddenly felt myself soaring without an effort through the cool air. A large vulture had seized me, and was mounting with a wide sweep of his wings higher and higher towards the region of the stars. The sensation was that of most perfect enjoyment, most delicious ease and peace. But suddenly the bird's claws released their hold. With a terrific swoop I felt myself falling through space. Down, down, down, towards the earth I fell, faint and giddy, till with a crash I came head foremost into a tree;—and awoke to find my feet had slipped off the branch on which they rested, and that, had I not taken the precaution to fasten myself securely in my seat, I should have fallen in stern reality to the ground. As it was I was luckily safe—the vulture it was that had fallen, and now lay prone on the ground beneath.

A red streak in the eastern horizon, like an *avant-coureur*, announced the near approach of day. The "early bird" was flying about, looking for any worms

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that might be foolish enough to tempt him to a breakfast. With a sharp, clear screech, one of the double-ended camel-birds made a head-foremost dive into a k'gung-tree—looking, with his long, strong, sharp beak, and tail feathers the same shape, just as if he was flying backwards. They are seen only in the k'gung forest, and then only in the parts where the stately giraffe makes his home, and this is why they are called "camel-birds," or "giraffe-birds."

The hunters also say it is so called because its cry resembles the word "camèl;" but I could never detect any closer resemblance to that sound than to the sound of the word "giraffe." They are very shy, flying straight up into the air at your approach, as if to see how near you are, and then, sailing away over a tall tree, they suddenly close their wings, and fall head or tail foremost, it is impossible to tell which, only to repeat the performance as you come close up to them again.

To procure a specimen under ordinary circumstances would necessitate shooting them with a bullet, and would be a difficult task at that; but here I had an unexpected opportunity of getting a shot. Certainly the bullet might spoil his skin, but if I would have one at all there was no other alternative. While waiting for a shot about a dozen others darted up, and clustered together in the tree, fluttering higher and higher, and uttering the most excited shrieks. Climbing further into the tree, I tried to look out through the branches to discover the cause of their trouble. Snakes would not be out so early in the morning, so it could not be that. Perhaps it was the hyena of the night before that they had discovered asleep. Suddenly some of the birds forsook the tree,

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and rising high into the air, darted down one after the other towards a particular patch of grass, and then as rapidly retreated. They were fairly frantic, each striving to excel the other in diving down towards that spot, but none ever striking. Watching carefully I could see a large full-grown lion stealing down by the side of the bunch of grass, following the track of our horses of the previous day, and making straight for the place where the giraffe lay, evidently guided by the scent. Not far off another cluster of camel-birds pointed to the spot where a second lion was following, and then, between the two, I espied a third. Never before had I fully appreciated the expression, "Things look different to a man up a tree." To see these three great greedy cats stealing along straight for the spot where I was in impromptu ambush was an unexpected excitement.

They slowly crept on, in line, the largest leading—a fine specimen of the tawny, short-legged, dark, shaggy-maned, big-headed species. As they passed over an open space they dropped close to their bellies, the birds redoubling their cries, and darting down at them with increased fury—just as if it had anything to do with them! Presently they got behind a clump of trees which concealed them from my view, so I crept softly down to my resting-place of the night before, and saw that my rifle was in order. The next three or four minutes seemed half an hour. I knew the lions were making almost straight for my tree, but could not see them, and anxiously waiting for them to appear. Presently I saw the leader, his back turned slightly towards me, cautiously creep towards his quarry, and then, when almost within springing distance, stop dead. Was he waiting for his mates to come up to him? As still as death he lies crouched.

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Why does he not spring? See! there right away on the opposite side comes one of his companions, and there, half-way between them, the third! Fancy the intelligence of the brutes, making the attack in a half-circle! After this nothing will induce me to believe that animals can't think. It must have been by a pre-concerted arrangement that they altered their formation from single line, and spread themselves round their prey when the scent had told them that it was within grasp, and the leader was evidently waiting for the others to reach their allotted places, so that they could all attack at once, and if one missed his spring he would drive the frightened quarry towards one or other of the rest. Now they all advanced simultaneously, making themselves appear smaller and smaller, so closely did they cling to the ground. I wondered if they were holding their breath as I was mine! Then with a sudden leap the biggest lion sprang clean over the brush pile, alighting with a roar on the other side. The others with a couple of bounds were by his side, all three roaring until the air fairly trembled, and the earth seemed to shake, as they tore up the ground with their fore-feet. Was it a roar of intimidation or of disappointment? Soon their roaring gave place to a sharp growling cough, as if something had stuck in their throats, accompanying each sound with a shower of sand, as, using both paws at a time, they dug the earth out with a jerk. Then their fury seemed spent, and they quietly sniffed around the pile under which the dead camel lay. The largest one contented himself with lapping the congealed blood that the jackals and vultures had left, while the others ate up the remaining viscera.

How I wished Lulu had been there with his camera!

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LIONS EATING THE GIRAFFE.

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What a grand picture this scene would have made! As I thought of him, I turned instinctively to see how high the sun was—it was already some distance above the sandhills, and the waggons could not, surely, be far off. Looking round in the direction from which they would come, I saw them approaching from the other side of a sand-dune, which lay some sixty yards away. Suddenly they stopped and turned, while Lulu ran through the grass, with his camera on his back, and "I'll-vatch-it" following, and Jan and the rest congregated round the waggon. Clearly they had heard the lions roar, and Lulu, who would run any risk to fulfil his dream of getting a portrait of "Leo at home," had started off in order that he might seize this chance. How anxiously I watched his movements, wondering if he would see the danger into which he was running and longing to be able to shout a warning to him! At last he stopped near the crest of a sand-dune, and then the glitter of the lens in the sun's rays told me that he was focussing the group. Turning to the lions I saw the largest of them was tearing a hole in the shoulder of the giraffe, spoiling the skin that Jan had reckoned on so much for shoe-soles. Then glancing back at the camera I saw Lulu working as coolly as in a studio, actually changing the shield: he had evidently taken one picture, and was going to get another.

In another half-minute he and "I'll-vatch-it" both raised their guns, and if I did not fire at once they might frighten the lions away. Hastily taking aim just behind the shoulder of the big one, I was in the act of pulling the trigger, when bang! bang! went both their rifles—mine almost simultaneously with the last one.

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The lions started up, and set up a thunder-like roar, one running back a pace or two, and springing at the place where a bullet struck the ground. As they stood lashing their tails, and uttering low, hoarse growls, another volley, and then another, was fired. I felt certain that I had not missed them every time, although they gave no visible signs of being wounded. Then suddenly the old lion charged straight towards Lulu. As long as I dared I sent my bullets after him till I was afraid of killing Lulu or "I'll-vatch-it" instead. With quick bounds, his tail between his legs, the lion was close upon them, when they, too, ceased firing, Lulu actually making another exposure, and "I'll-vatch-it" standing by like a stolid German soldier awaiting orders. What madness! What could possess them to run such risks! I could restrain myself no longer, and shouted with all my might,—

"You fools! Fire! Shoot, or you will both be killed!"

Before the words were out of my mouth, Lulu, keeping the black cloth over his head, had rushed forward with the camera, shaking its long, thin legs in front of the maddened beast. What foolhardiness! It was just like him; he never did know what fear was. Jan had told us a few days before of a man meeting a lion and frightening him away by bending over and running towards him backwards, waving a large black hat; but to deliberately try such an experiment is another thing.

Suddenly the lion stops, lashes his sides with his tail, and with one bound turns tail. Hurrah! he is coming back full tilt towards me. Bang! goes "I'll-vatch-it's" gun; bang! bang! again and again; and mine replies each time. But the brute never stops till he reaches

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the side of the giraffe, where the other two have been waiting all this time. He must have nineteen—let alone the feline's proverbial nine—lives to survive such a fusillade; my No. 40 seemed to have no more effect upon him than peas from a pea-shooter. There he stood, breathing defiance at us, but not seeming to be able to make up his mind whether to charge again or to beat a retreat. I sent a shot, first at one and then at the other of his two cowardly companions, who fled incontinently, leaving their leader to brave it out alone all through. Meantime "I'll-vatch-it" had come after the retreating lion, and I could hear him shouting,—

"Hey! Var is dey?"

"All gone but one," I replied, "and there he is," emphasizing my words by another shot at the forsaken king, this time taking careful aim at his eye.

I had hardly had time to see what effect my shot had had, when bang! went a gun right under me, making me jump almost off my perch. It was one of the Bushmen, who had crept up with his muzzle-loader that had a bore like a young cannon.

"Quick!" I shouted. "Drop your gun and climb up, or you're a gone coon!" but, instead of obeying, he ran behind a noi-bush. The lion started after him, but "stopped short—never to go again"—and fell down dead.

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CHAPTER XIX.

A lion's leap—*Qui s'excuse s'accuse*—Watching the wildebeeste—After the giraffe—Astonishing the natives—Photographing the dying giraffe—Catching a baby giraffe—Cutting up the booty—Making biltong—Stalking the ostriches—A night of feasting—A two-legged lion—A nocturnal adventure—How the poisoned arrows work.

I DON'T think I ever made a much quicker movement than when I came down that tree, shouting as I went, "Come on, he is dead!" In a moment I was joined by Lulu, "I'll-vatch-it" puffing along close behind. Sending back the Bushmen to fetch the waggons and hurry up the lazy, cowardly Bastards, who all this time had stirred not a muscle to help us, although they must have seen the danger Lulu was in, I turned to Lulu, saying,—

"It's the merest piece of luck that you are not inside this feline specimen of natural history. You are too foolhardy altogether."

"No," he replied; "I plead guilty to the 'hardy,' but not to the 'fool,' or perhaps I might have occupied the first floor of the royal tawny bluffer's stomach. You mustn't talk to me, for I'll back my camera against your gun any day. You one side, and "I'll-vatch-it" the other, both blazing away, and yet couldn't stop the lion, whereas all I had to do was to shake my three-legged stand at him, and he bolted like a shot. If he had sprung at the camera, I should have slipped out underneath. Where were you all this time?"

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"Up that tree; slept there all night; and should have fallen out if it hadn't been for that strap."

"Just like you; always doing some foolish thing. You are old enough to know better. Come, and let's examine the brute, and see if you did hit him, after all, or whether he died of fright."

"Wait a moment; just come first and help me measure the distance he jumped. He sprang right clean over the giraffe from this spot, and landed on the other side. You can see his footmarks quite plain." And we carefully measured the distance, and found it no less than twenty-three feet six inches.

We then set to work to help "I'll-vatch-it" skin the lion; but, before we had finished, the waggons were close upon us. I hardly knew how to restrain my anger at the cowardice of the Bastards, and particularly of Dirk and Klas, who of all others ought to have stuck to Lulu; and I threatened to have it out with them. "I'm just in the humour to roll the grass with them," I said.

"Now, governor," interrupted Lulu, "just you take my advice, and don't say anything to them. They did not know what I was going to do, for as soon as I heard the roar, I jumped out of the waggon with the camera, as soon as ever I could slip my arms through the shoulder-straps, and ran ahead as fast as I could, without saying anything to anybody. 'I'll-vatch-it' followed me of his own accord as soon as he could get his rifle out of the straps. So don't get into any temper, and have a row with them. We are obliged to be with the cowards some time yet, and it's best to be, or seem to be, on good terms with them, although there are times when I find it hard to be civil—especially when they take advantage of your absence, and come begging for everything they see."

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"Well, you shall have your way this time. I will just listen patiently, and hear what excuses this mongrel veldt-cornet will make for himself and his dastardly Bastards."

"Morrow, Sieur, ye es noch lebe" ("Morning, Sieur, you are still alive"). "You ought not to have stayed here last night; the klein Sieur was very anxious, and would hardly let us sleep an hour last night. But he did not think of the danger when he ran after the lions. Don't blame me for letting him take such risks. I could not help it; he was off before I knew it. Besides, I had to see to the protection of the stock, as the roar of the lions frightened them so much that there would have been a stampede, and everything broken, if we had not turned them round and stayed by them. You Americans are too hasty. It seems as if you were tired of life, taking such unnecessary risks. What's the use of taking the portrait of a lion—it's no good when you have it—besides, he cannot pay you for it. It isn't as much value as his skin, and that won't fetch much."

He evidently thought that he was smoothing me over, as he laughingly finished his speech. But his little jokes and his feeble excuses had no effect on me. He was a coward, and I intended to prove him so. Speaking as sternly as I could, I said simply, "Have the horses saddled, and bring them here; three or four of us will follow the other two lions, while the rest skin and cut up the giraffe; and when they have finished, let them load up and drive out to that clump of trees on the flat, to the left. I wounded a hyena here last night, and, as I'm sure he won't go far, you can send one of my Bushmen on his spoor; and we'll bag him too."

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Jan looked at me, as much as to say, "Do you mean it?" and seeing nothing in my expression that gave him hope that I was not in earnest, the smile left his sickly, yellow face, and he stood balancing himself, first on one leg and then on the other, striking at the grass with his riding sjambok, as if he did not know how to begin, and was trying to knock an idea out of that—which he presently succeeded in doing, for, looking up with a self-satisfied air, he commenced to speak.

"Sieur must listen to me first, then do as he will. The oxen have had no sama to-day, and there is none here; the horses must also be sent in different directions to graze. By the time the giraffe is loaded and the oxen inspanned it will be dark, and our skerm not made, which is too much work where the lions are so plentiful; and if we lose either horses or oxen through these worthless things, Verlander will hold me responsible. The Bushmen can go after the spoor, they understand it better, and if one of them gets killed there is no difference,—their life is worth nothing."

"No, Jan! I came out here to hunt; some of the men can look for sama, and the others make the skerm, while you and I, with Dirk, Klas, Kert, and 'I'll-vatch-it,' can follow up the spoor. One Bushman can go ahead of us and find it, as it would be difficult to keep it in this thick grass."

"No, Sieur; please let me have my way to-day, and don't think that it's because I am afraid. It's not that. To-morrow we must have our horses fresh to hunt the giraffe. This morning we saw fresh spoor of five going north; and as this is their feeding-ground, they won't be far away. The lions may have gone a good distance before lying down, and if they are badly

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wounded they will be either dead or so stiff by to-morrow morning that the Bushmen can easily kill them, while we are after the giraffes, which are worth hunting, as the skin is valuable to me, and meat we must both have. If it had not been for that, I would not have come. My waggon must return full of dried meat, as I have many mouths to feed at my werf."

All this was spoken in a pitiful, supplicating voice, and was so well put on that I rather admired him for the way he covered up his cowardice, so I said,—

"Jan, I agree to this under one condition, that is, that when the hunt is over, and we are on our way home, if we come across a lion spoor, you and your party will join me and follow them up and hunt them. If you lose a horse, you can take mine in its place."

"Yah! Sieur, dat is better, ek vill so do."

The compact was sealed, and while the men mounted and rode away to find sama, Lulu and I walked over and had a look at the lion-skin, which was now staked out on the ground, fur side down. "I'll-vatch-it" standing by it said, "Look you now, see dat ve always don't shoot miss; his skin is mit holes full; I seventeen have count; he is shoot every place his body over."

That night everything, save for the occasional bark of a jackal, was as quiet as a country village in England. One would have thought there were no carnivora within a thousand miles of us. But it was impossible to altogether forget the events of the morning. No doubt many people similarly placed would have found hidden terrors in the solemn silence. But custom overcomes all things, and while the Londoner who could sleep through all the rattle and bustle of busy street traffic would lie awake here,

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listening for the dread lion's roar, the Bushman, born in the wilds amid the roar of the lion and the howl of the hyena, and brought up to face danger and death at every turn, could lie down naked and unarmed before his fire, and forget the possibility of peril—just as the miner will go down into the bowels of the earth day after day, as light-hearted as if such a thing as fire-damp did not exist.

The next morning we were stirring early. The trees looked like weeping willows, as their boughs were bent under the weight of the long pieces of flesh cut from the giraffe, and hung there to dry—some of which we had for breakfast, roasted in the ashes and washed down with the "Kalahari wine"—to wit, the juice of roasted sama. Before the great giver of light and heat was out of bed, we were on our way over a broad grassy plain, riding towards a *koppje*, which, although it looked "just over there," took us about two hours to reach. Just at the foot of the hill, amongst a thicket of raisin-bushes, we came upon a herd of gnu, whose curiosity we excited very much. They trotted slowly past us, and when about fifty yards away suddenly stopped, turned around, snorted, and pawed up the ground. I raised my rifle and took aim at a splendid old blue bull, and was about to fire, when Jan said, "Please, Sieur, don't shoot; we can get them any time. Some camel (giraffe) may be near by, and the noise would frighten them away. We must get amongst them to-day before they see us, and then you will see that they will not run half as fast, and we will be able to drive them to the waggons." So we left the provoking things standing there, staring after us, and rode slowly up the steep sandhill. Just as our heads were level with the top we halted, taking

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care not to expose ourselves to any animals that might be on the other side; and while the others reconnoitred I sat and watched the gnu, who moved away a few rods and then stood watching and wondering what we could be; when, having satisfied themselves that we were not of their sort, they turned tail and galloped away in single file until they were lost in the distance.

I was so intent on watching the fleeing wildebeeste that I quite forgot my companions, till hearing my name called out, I looked around and saw them all at the foot of the hill waiting for me. To get down to them was like riding down the side of a house, the mare sliding most of the way, bracing with her forelegs, and almost sitting down.

"Which way are you going, Jan?" I said, as they moved off with that peculiar jog-trot that the horses here have.

"Straight to that *vaal koppje* (grey hill), and there off-saddle for a bit to give the horses a rest."

"What a pity, Jan, we did not shoot half a dozen of those gnu. They would have made as much meat as one giraffe, and perhaps we shall not see any giraffe at all."

"Yes, Sieur, that may be; but if we do it will be more than one. We are almost sure to come across the five whose spoor I cut yesterday; and when we hunt giraffe we must not look at anything else. It's the same as when you are after ostriches, they must be hunted alone, or you will not get any.

The rest of the ride to the sandhill, through an open park-like forest, with the sheen of the bright sun streaming through the dark-green leaves of the k'gung-trees, and lighting up the tops of the rich,

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ripe grass, as the gentle breeze rolled it along in golden billows, was very beautiful. Now and then we made little détours to avoid the thorns of the thick, low-branched trees, whose short, sharp, hooked points would hold fast anything they touched, sometimes playing pickpocket by stealing your handkerchief. Anon we passed the spoor of gems-bok, so thick that the ground was quite covered with their hoof-marks.

"What herds of them there must be!" I whispered to Jan, who rode alongside of me.

"Yes, Sieur, there's plenty here about, and yet sometimes when looking for them you may ride for days without finding one; then again you will find more than you can shoot."

Arriving at the hill, the horses were soon knee-haltered and turned loose to graze. I had thoughtfully put some roasted giraffe-meat into my saddle-bag; but the rest, like the foolish virgins, had failed to supply their needs, though they fared better than the foolish virgins in the parable, for they were successful in "borrowing" from me; and after an interval of "ten minutes for refreshments," I went with Jan and his *swaar* (brother-in-law) to the top of the hill and prospected for the long-necks.

My field-glasses were the admiration of the Bushmen. "What a wonderful country America must be," said Jan to his *swaar*, as I handed him the glasses to "take a sight." "They have glasses that bring things close to you, and guns full of bullets, and such knives! Have you seen the Sieur's hunting-knife, *swaar?* He must show it to you;" but he stopped short, turning to me and saying, "I see a giraffe's head by yonder dead tree. Look, Sieur!" and taking the glasses I saw a group of four feeding quietly.

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"They must be the five whose spoor I saw yesterday," said Jan; "as long as they don't get scent of us they will continue where they are. The wind is just right; so we can ride straight up to them, and they will stand and look at us till we are right among them; then they will be off with a rush, and we must ride them down; they won't go very far before they slacken their speed, and in an hour we will have them cut up." Taking a last look at them, and laying out the way we must ride to them, we descended the hill, and were soon mounted and riding under the shelter of a long sand-dune towards the spot where the unsuspecting giraffes were quietly picking the seed-pods off the tops of the k'gung-trees. When we were within a hundred yards of them we saw a small giraffe coming from under a huge camel-tree right in front of us. "That's the baby," said Jan, "the others are close by." The pretty young thing was quite graceful in comparison with the ungainly form of the older ones. He soon disappeared behind a clump of bushes, and joined two more, one of which, Jan said, must be the mother. They never moved, but stared stupidly at us until we were within thirty yards of them. Then they wheeled and set off as fast as their long awkward legs would carry them. Turning round a clump of thick trees at full gallop, I came suddenly on to the old bull. If my mare had not shied to one side as she caught sight of him, I should have been under his fore-legs. As it was, I "felt" his large eyes looking down on me, and then he bolted and joined the rest. It was with difficulty that I made the mare follow, so frightened was she, but succeeded in keeping pretty well up with the others. Already Jan had almost headed them off, and

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in a few moments the frightened creatures, finding it impossible to get up the wind, turned round and headed straight for our waggons. How grand they looked as they rolled steadily along in a cluster; "a sheet would have covered them," as they say of race-horses. There was a bull and a calf, keeping close together, not in a panic, but in an easy swing, and looking round every now and then to see how close we were upon them.

I had just caught sight of the waggons in the distance, and was wondering whether Lulu and the others would be on the look-out for us, when I found myself on the ground, with my mouth full of sand. My mare had broken into an aard-vark hole. Dirk, who was close behind, pulled up and dismounted, and in less time than it takes to tell it, I was after them again on his horse, leaving him to look after the mare. By the time I caught them up we were close to the waggons. The old bull sheered off to the left, and made a rush for a tree, but came to a sudden halt, brought to bay by my two dogs. Close behind was Lulu with his camera.

"Hurry," I shouted, "the dogs will keep him at bay," and, leaping from my saddle, I ran in front of him, encouraging the dogs.

"Now shoot!" shouted Lulu, "I am ready;" and raising my little pop-gun, I fired at him behind the shoulder, about eighteen inches from the vertebræ. To my astonishment, he rolled forward and fell down like a house.

"That's splendid," cried Lulu; "I've got the flash of the gun: it will be a splendid picture; the composition is perfect, it could not have been arranged better. Let Korap hold your horse, and you go and

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sit on the giraffe while I take another. Look a little to the right: raise this side of your hat, and let the light strike your face. There, that's good."

While this was going on we heard several shots a little distance away, and by this time one of the cows came slowly up, with Jan and Nef behind, and came to bay alongside of some trees. She was completely

SHOOTING A GIRAFFE.

done up; and as she slowly rolled along she put me in mind of a drunken lighthouse. Bang! went a gun, and before Lulu had time to get ready a second plate, down she came, like a mast going over the side. She had hardly done kicking, when little Korap ran to her, and commenced sucking the milk out of her teats.

"Where are the others, Jan?" said I.

"The baby is on the other side of the grove. He

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won't run away. He will wait for his mother, and when the horses are a little rested, we will catch him alive, and Sieur can take him home with him to America. The other cow lies over on the other side of the bush, quite a half-mile away. We must get the oxen to drag her up to the waggon. Come, Sieur," he continued, "is not this worth a drink of eau-de-Cologne? Sieur must stand treat to-day." Jan was very fond of drinking eau-de-Cologne, for which "I'll-vatch-it" made him pay five shillings a bottle, although it only cost threepence.

"Yes, Jan, it's my treat to-day; come to the waggons, and you shall have two bottles, for to-day has been grand sport. Four dead and one waiting for us to catch!"

"You will enjoy catching the young one. One year we caught six, and had them tied up to the trees; but we let them go again, as they were no use for meat, and their young skins wouldn't make soles. But what is the matter? Sieur's trousers are torn, and your leg is bleeding."

"That's nothing, Jan. The mare fell into an aard-vark hole, and pitched me over her head flying. The going through the air was pleasant, but striking on a three-thorn bush was slightly disagreeable. It split my coat open down the back, so I pulled it off and dropped it. That reminds me that Dirk has not turned up with the mare. She may be hurt. Here, 'I'll-vatch-it,' give Jan two bottles of his favourite beverage while I go and look after Lady Anna."

I had not gone far before I met Dirk coming along, slowly leading the mare.

"She is hurt somewhere, Sieur," he said, "but I cannot tell where: she can hardly walk, yet her legs

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seem all right. I'm afraid she won't chase any more giraffes."

The poor brute rubbed her nose against my shoulder as I patted her on the neck.

"The strain seems to be in her back, Dirk. Rest might cure her; go slowly to the waggon, and have the Bushmen bring her some sama."

When I returned Jan was ready and waiting for me to go and catch the baby. Leaving orders for the span of oxen to go and bring all the dead giraffes down to the waggon, we soon found the orphan in a sort of grove of k'gung-trees. He was bigger than I expected, now we saw him by himself, and must have been at least a couple of years old.

"There he comes," shouted Jan, who had ridden ahead; "he is coming back looking for his mamma. Spread out and form a circle around him; the horsemen must take the outside to keep him from running out into the clear flat."

As we closed in upon him he stood still, as if making up his mind which was the best way to break through the cordon drawn around him; (Nef) Klas then galloped up to him, with a rein in his hand, and the next minute he was rolling in the sand, with his horse on top of him. The giraffe had reared and struck the horse on the shoulder with his right fore-foot, and then given him a "left-hander" in the side, knocking horse and rider down like nine-pins, which made us all shout with laughter. Slowly raising himself up, as if he was not quite sure he was alive, Nef Klas looked around at the laughing circle, who chaffed him.

"He shakes hands a little too hard," said one.

"You must go up to him easier, you frightened him," chimed in another.

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"Come here and we will pick you up."

"His feets was too plendy, Klas," said "I'll-vatch-it."

But Klas took it all quietly, and, slowly catching his horse, mounted and rode over to us.

No persuasion of the sjambok could induce the horse to go near the giraffe a second time. The baby was master of the situation; and looked down upon both horse and man with a pleading look in his large sad eyes, as if to say, "Only give me back my mother and I'll be happy again." Feeling sorry for the poor, innocent, harmless creature, I said to Jan, "Let him go; he is big enough to take care of himself." And we all turned back towards the waggons. The poor thing never tried to escape, but stood there quietly watching us. Jan rode up to my side, and said he thought I would like to have it alive.

"Well, Jan, he's much better here, and may give you a nice run some day. It would be too much trouble to drive him all the way to Cape Town, let alone the money it would cost to transport it from there to England."

When we returned, all four of the giraffes lay there ready to be skinned and cut up. Lulu had photographed the ox-team dragging up the old bull, having for a background to his picture an old deserted Kattea village of about twenty huts, and was now waiting to get a picture of us in the act of skinning the animal. All hands went to work, some getting the dinner ready, while the others were busy with their knives. The skin, which was nearly an inch thick on the back and neck, and required two men to pull it up while the other cut it loose, was taken off one side at a time, by cutting it from the back of the head along the neck through the short mane, down the back to the

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root of the tail, around under the middle of the belly and up the throat. When the skin was taken off the side that lay uppermost, they commenced to cut up the carcase, first disembowelling it, and then removing the meat in layers from the bones of the fore and hind-legs; then the flesh along the backbone was taken next, after which the ribs were cut away. By this means the weight was so lessened that six of us could turn the body over.

Dinner being announced, we soon caused a large quantity of meat to disappear—a common accomplishment in this country; but after all the exertions of the day we were sadly in want of some decent liquor to wash it down. The sama seemed more bitter than ever, and Lulu suffered very much, first from thirst and next from the nausea caused by drinking the decoction. To try and disguise the bitter taste was only wasting good sugar and coffee; it was like mucilage flavoured with gall; so we all voted to cut up all the giraffes that night and "trek" in search of water, or at least of sweet sama. Setting fire to the deserted huts of the Kattea village, we worked by their fitful glare till midnight, and started about 2 a.m.

Outspanning at daybreak we saw the young giraffe following us—guided, no doubt, by the strong smell of his dead mother's body. It was not till night, however, after a terrible day's toiling for the cattle beneath the broiling sun that we came to a patch of sweet sama, where we camped, cutting up the meat into strips, and hanging it on every available spot—on bushes and trees, on ropes and waggon-chains, till you could not look anywhere without seeing festoons of meat strips, like gigantic sausages strung in a pork-butcher's shop.

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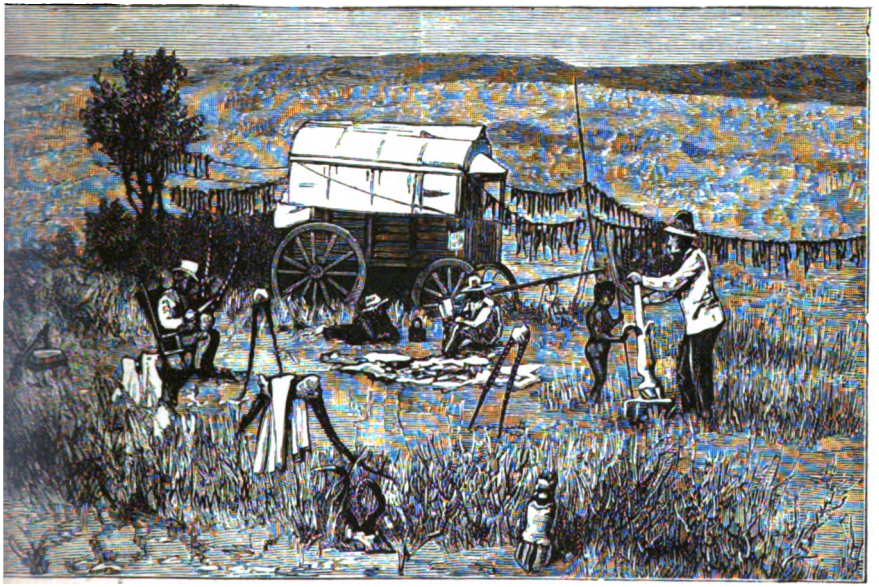
Lulu took a photograph of the scene—making the last in the series of the "Camel Hunt;" and while the meat was drying and the cattle resting, the hunters went out after ostriches: the foot-hunters took one route and the horsemen another, agreeing to meet at a high *koppje* in the distance. My mare still being very weak I joined the party on foot, taking with me



DRYING MEAT.

old Kert, who was an adept at ostrich-hunting, having adopted it for a living for many years. Spreading out like skirmishers, in couples, we looked stealthily over the tops of every sandhill we came to, but without result for three or four hours, till we picked up the spoor of a clump of six, of which Kert said he could tell from their footprints that four were *manekies* (males). Signalling to the rest of our party, we crept on with redoubled caution—for no game, fur or

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feather, has sharper eyes than the ostrich—the Bushmen reconnoitring from the summit of each sandhill so carefully that even I, who knew where to look for them, could not see them, so cunningly did they take advantage of the cover of every tuft of grass. At last we came upon the ostriches in a long *straat*, or hollow, at the end of which was a *whitte haat* tree. Here the Bushmen told me to go and hide myself, while they crept round to the other side of the flat and hemmed them in. It did not take me long to get alongside the tree, and then crawling along the ground between the tufts of grass, I succeeded in getting behind it unobserved. There were the birds about 500 yards from me, pecking the grass and bushes, hitching their awkward bodies along, and now and then standing still and looking round as if on the watch for any intruder.

I tried hard to see Kert or the Bushmen, but they were invisible, and I almost began to think they had mistaken the flat, or had gone off after some other birds. Closer and closer the birds approached, until they were opposite me, not a hundred yards away. It was hard lines for me to see them so close and not be able to shoot—and my fingers itched to pull the trigger, as I held my rifle pointed at the leading male, ready for emergencies. Suddenly he fell to the ground, and at the same moment bang! came the report of the gun that had knocked him down. Before I could get a bead on another bird, bang! went another gun, followed immediately by mine. By this time the others were flying off pell-mell over the rise, leaving one of their number in the dust, and followed by four or five more bullets—with what effect I could not say.

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Running down to where the dead bird lay, I plucked its wing and tail feathers, and set to work to skin it, for the purpose of making a stalking-dress; but had hardly commenced when I heard four or five shots in quick succession in the direction in which the other birds had made off; and before I had finished Jan and Nef Klas rode up, each with a bunch of long waving plumes in his hat.

"How many did you kill, Jan?" I asked.

"Only one, Sieur; Kert wounded it and we finished it, so he gave us these feathers. He is now skinning it, because you wanted the skin; but, Sieur, we will never wear a real skin any more when stalking. The dress of grass and feathers that we wear is quite good enough for the ostriches, and the real skins make us look so like a real bird that several Bushmen have been shot by mistake. When a hunter wears the ordinary dress we can tell the difference, although the ostriches cannot; but when we wear the skin you cannot tell the hunter from the birds."

"Well, we'll take this skin home anyhow. Here, Jan, put it on your horse along with the thighs, which we will eat for supper to-night."

While we rode back, Jan complained that ostrich-hunting was not nearly so profitable as it used to be before they took to breeding tame birds, although the wild feathers are by far the best.

"Why, Sieur, in one season of six months, I and another, with our Bushmen, made over 4000*l.* Feathers used to be worth 40*l.* per lb., and every bird we shot was reckoned at 25*l.*, and sometimes was worth more. And now they are not worth more than 7*l.* or 8*l.* each when their feathers are full-grown.

"But it's all our own fault. We hunters have cut

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our own throats by catching the young wild birds and selling them to go to the colony. That year we caught and sold ten broods: there were 120 birds altogether, and they brought us 10*l.* each, hard cash, gold, which you never see now. Tom Jones and his party sold over 200 young birds that year, and so it went on until now the farmers in the colony supply the market; and we get no more than two shillings a pen, although feathers from wild birds are the best, and bring a much better price than those from tame ones. They are brighter, more glossy, and have more life in them; the difference can be seen at once, when you see a blood feather."

"What's a blood feather, Jan?"

"One that's pulled out with blood in the pen. The tame ones are cut. If they were pulled out, they would never grow again. I know of two or three hunters that made themselves rich in one season: they have large farms now and thousands of sheep and cattle, and I might have been like them, but I fancied *smousing* (trading), and in two years I lost all I had."

So we talked as we walked until we reached the camp, and soon our supper of ostrich drum-sticks was ready. Nicer game, meat, poultry—or by whatever name it ought to be called—I never tasted than ostrich-flesh. The flavour is a kind of mixture of fowl and flesh, but better than either. I had some pieces dried, in order to bring a sample home with me, and if it retains its peculiar flavour some of my London friends shall try it—but they must bring their own sauce, i.e. a hungry stomach.

Every one was in a happy frame of mind after the fatigues of the day, and songs and dances were kept up well into the night, Bastard masters and Bushmen

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servants alike resigning themselves to the jovial influences of a well-stocked larder. When peace and quiet were at last established, and the camp was as still as a country cemetery, the moon like a disc of pure ice suspended from the vast blue vault, I was startled by a loud grumbling roar, something like the bellowing of a bull, only the sounds were shorter and quicker, and very suggestive of the sharp coughing growl of a lion. Hastily arousing the sleepers, I exclaimed, "There is a lion close upon us!" Just as I spoke the sounds were repeated, but a burst of laughter greeted them, Jan explaining, "That lion won't bite, he wears feathers."

"What do you mean, Jan? Nothing that wears feathers can make a noise like that."

"Yes, Sieur, there is, and it lays eggs: it is an ostrich!"

I could hardly believe that an ostrich could have made *that* noise; in fact, if any one had asked me whether an ostrich made any sound at all, I should have said 'No.' Now I think of it, the sound is exactly like the "roars" of the wild beast that you have no doubt heard at a circus, when the little pantomime of "The Bear and the Sentinel" is played. The sound is produced by stretching a skin tightly over one end of a keg, attaching a string to the centre of the skin inside it, and pulling a gloved hand, previously well rosined, up the string.

"How far is it away, Jan? It sounds very close by. Can't we go and shoot it? The moon is very bright."

"It's not far away, Sieur; but you cannot see to shoot it by moonlight. Besides, it would be dangerous, as a lion might be lurking in the grass, and might spring on you. No, no, we will stay where we are, and in the morning take up his spoor."

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At that moment Suku, one of the Bushmen, came up, and offered to go after the ostrich now, creeping after him with bow and arrow.

"Good, let him go; and if he gets him, I will give him a silk handkerchief for his head."

STALKING THE OSTRICH.

In a twinkling he was off, and soon disappeared in the herbage. His movements were as stealthy as a tiger's in the jungle, and the gentle breeze that slightly waved the grass helped to conceal his approach. I

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could not lie down again like the rest and sleep, being anxious about Suku's success.

The bird would every now and then make its peculiar cry—a good guide to his whereabouts, and presently I heard a second cry, not as loud as the other—no doubt the female answering to her mate's call. This went on for about twenty minutes, and then the sounds ceased. Walking up and down, wondering whether Suku had killed or merely frightened the ostrich, I was startled by his appearing at my side, without any warning of his approach. It seemed as if he had come out of the earth. A smile played around the corners of his well-shaped mouth, which did not denote disappointment. I could not understand his "clicks," but he gave me to understand by pantomime that he had crawled very close to the ostrich, and then answered his call by mimicking the cry of the female, when the stupid bird came right on to him full trot, receiving one arrow at close quarters, and the second at a short distance as he ran away. The Bushman concluded by indicating that he would lie down and sleep, and as soon as the sun rose would follow the bird to where he lay dead; so I arranged with him that he must call me to go with him, and lay down to sleep.

In the morning, as bright Aurora peeped over the trees, we two were following the spoor of the ostrich over the red sand-dunes, and down the long hollows between, for several miles. Now and then we lost the trail for a short time, but Suku soon found it again, until we came to some bushes. Here he showed me where the bird had stopped and tried to get rid of the arrows, part of one of which the Bushman found, broken, a few yards away. The short poisoned piece of barbed hard wood still remained in him, however, and we

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could see by the grass and bushes that he had walked a few feet, and then run a few yards, as if bewildered. Here his marks showed that he had begun to stagger, which Suku imitated by walking like a drunken man; and half a mile further we found him stiff and cold: the poison had overcome life, but not without a fight for it, as all around him the grass was torn up in his final struggle with death. Neither of the arrows had pierced any vital part, the poison having been absorbed by the blood; but this would not spoil the flesh for eating, so, after pulling his feathers out, we each shouldered a leg and returned to camp.

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CHAPTER XX.

Butterfly-hunting—A chameleon—Mixing the poison-pot—Smearing the arrows—How the arrows are made—"Honey-beer"—How the wild-bees' nests are made—Honey-gathering—Chewing the grubs—Making honey-beer—A drunken orgie—A false alarm—A tragic sequel to the feast—Friends not enemies.

For the next ten days, while the others were out hunting gems-bok, Lulu and I busied ourselves with collecting butterflies and insects. The former were limited to four or five varieties, but of the latter it was impossible to search a square yard of ground without coming across half a dozen fresh sorts every time.

In butterfly-hunting all the "heat and burden of the day" fell to my share. Lulu would have none of it. While I was in full chase after a large sulphur-winged butterfly, a gaudy beauty, looking like a flying rainbow, would cross my path; but not all my entreaties would induce Lulu to take up the chase.

"No, thank you," he would say, "I can keep myself quite warm enough without that. They are not worth shedding one drop of perspiration, and *I* don't see the fun of trying to water the wilderness with my honest sweat, every drop of which makes two thirsts, and as for quenching them with sama-water it's like putting out a fire with oil. Besides, as boss of this establishment, I think you ought to have a little more respect for your dignity. It is quite ridiculous, in fact

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out of place, to see you running after a little moth, hat in hand, like a big schoolboy, puffing and blowing all to no purpose; for what is the use of them when you have caught them? I don't mind digging the roots of some of these beautiful flowers, but you don't catch me running after butterflies, or handling the nasty crawling bugs. The study of entomology in books is nice enough. There the beastly things cannot crawl on you, but to put theory into practice is energy wasted."

So I was left to bag my own butterflies and beetles, while he sat down and leisurely dug a few bulbs. But his heart was not in the work; photography or sketching was the only thing he would exert himself about, and when there was anything to do in that line no amount of exertion was too great for him.

I had just fallen headlong down a sandbank while running after a large yellow butterfly, when I heard Lulu shout for me, but I did not take any notice until I had secured the specimen under my broad-brimmed *sombrero*, and then I saw him holding up something on a stick, and calling me to come and see it.

"Look at that," he said; "it beats anything you have found; it crawled out of that bush, close to my hand, and might have bitten me, but I soon stamped the life out of it. See what a strange colour it is."

"Yes," I said; "and in a minute it will be another colour. It is a chameleon, and would not have hurt you if you had caught it alive with your hands. Look, it's changing again; it is nearly golden now."

"So it is! I ought to have known it was a chameleon; but I never thought. What are those that I crushed out of it?"

"Why, Lu, those are its eggs. Now let's measure

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it; give me your rule. What a large one; it is just fifteen and a half inches long. What a pity it is spoiled for a specimen. You are as bad as the natives. You think every crawling or creeping thing is poisonous. That puts me in mind that we were to be back to see the Bushmen make their poison and smear their arrows with it. Come along, we must not miss that for all the chameleons, though I should like to see if there isn't another in this bush. However, we mustn't wait, but go round to the druggist's shop as quickly as possible."

On reaching the waggons, Kert said the Bushmen had gone off to make preparations, and that we had better follow quickly, as they were anxious to get everything finished before the return of the hunters, whom they did not wish to enlighten as to the *modus operandi*. So, telling him to lead on, we silently followed him over one sand-dune after another, until we came to a high *koppje*, at the foot of which was a clump of thick dark-green k'gung-trees intermixed with green thorns. To judge by their weird and weather-beaten looks these armed guardians must have been on duty for centuries keeping watch over the solemn, dark precincts. To steal by them we were obliged to creep on our hands and knees, their spiny branches catching us first by the arm, and then by the leg, as if to question our right to enter; when we suddenly came out into an open space, where we discovered all our Bushmen, sitting around a fire, as if waiting for some one. Old Kert made a few clicking sounds, when they all arose to receive us, but not a word was spoken; motioning us to be seated, they pantomimed, by putting the finger at right angles with the lips, that we were to be silent.

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In front of them lay thirty or forty large bulbs, which I recognized as the fan-leaved poison bulb that bore such a beautiful flower. The root ends were sliced off, and placed on the silky-looking dry skins that were removed from the outer covering of the bulb, and into which a creamy liquid slowly oozed.

When the juice ceased to run another slice would be cut off about an inch thick, and a fresh flow would take place, and so on, until the bulb was exhausted. As each new slice was cut the Bushmen all danced around, uttering a kind of grunt, and keeping time by stamping on the ground with their heels. Altogether about two quarts of the milky exudation were collected, the whole being put into one of our round iron pots that had been used to hold grease for the waggons, and then placed on the fire. Little Korap took charge of the pot, now and then raising it up, to keep it from boiling over, while the others cleared a space, about a yard square, on which a hyena-skin was placed—hair side down. Each man then took from an old horn, or other receptacle, a number of dried snakes' poison-bags, which looked like bits of dirty rag, or pieces of skin, and threw them on the skin, along with two pieces of reed about six inches long. This being done, two of them disappeared in the thick bush, shortly returning with four snakes, two long yellow ones, one puff adder, and one dark cobra, all of which had the appearance of having been recently killed: these they threw down, amid clapping of hands, and then they set to work dissecting the snakes' heads, taking the poison-sacs out as dexterously as a medical student would remove a muscle. The poison-bags were placed on the skin, around which they all again sat, and howled a kind of weird song, in monotone, keeping

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time to it by clapping their hands, each man keeping on as long as he could hold out without breathing, and then stopping with a jerk and a grunt to catch his breath. This ceremony was kept up for nearly an hour, and was beginning to be very monotonous to us, when suddenly little Korap clapped his hands. In a moment they ceased their chant, and, all grabbing what was on the skin, ran to the poison-pot, which Korap kept constantly stirring, and into which each man, standing one behind the other, stamping and grunting all the time, threw his contribution of "witch-doctor" stuff. The one with the reeds was last but one, and, splitting them, he knocked them together until he was satisfied their contents were emptied into the pot, and then, last of all, came the man carrying the poison-ducts. As soon as they were added to the cauldron Korap hastily put a skin over the top, carried it across, and placed it on the skin, the others following. While he shook the pot the others danced around him, now shouting and gesticulating frantically, now putting themselves into all kinds of positions, representing the contortions of various animals dying with poison. Their pantomime was so good that we could recognize the different animals they were imitating.

This they kept up nearly half an hour, and then another clap, this time on the pot, from Korap, gave the signal for them to cease, which they instantly did, dropping down on their knees, on the skin around the pot. The cover was now removed, and Kert motioned us to come closer. Each of them now dipped a small twig in, and, twisting it around, pulled it out with a thread of glutinous stuff adhering, which they held up to the light, scanning its quality, like connoisseurs of

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wine in the London docks—only they did not taste it. All having pronounced it right, they took out of a skin bag a red-looking substance, as fine as flour, which was dropped in, and stirred it until the concoction was of the proper consistency. Up to this moment not a word had been spoken, but now they began to talk, which gave me an opportunity to ask questions, for I was bursting with curiosity to know what the reeds contained, and what the powder was.

"What is in the reeds?" I asked Kert.

"That, Sieur, is what the Lange Berg Bushmen use. It is a spider, found in the rocks of their mountains. The colony Bushmen that I was brought up amongst never use it, but use the milk of the *gift boom* (poison-tree) that grows on the mountains along the Orange River. We boil it down until it is thick, like the milk from this *gift ball* (poison-bulb). Then we add the snake poison, as you have just seen. It is not necessary to put the spiders or the snake poison in, as the juice of the *gift ball* or the *gift boom* will kill anything if it is boiled down thick; but it does not act so quickly when the snake poison is not added."

"Well, Kert, and what is the red powder they put in?"

"That is a red stone they grind up fine to make it thicker. When it is cold it hardens, and when they want to put it on their arrows they warm it, which softens it, so that they can smear them. Wait a minute and you will see them smear all the arrows they have before the stuff gets cold. What is left they will roll up in balls, so that each may have some to carry with him. Sieur must look now, they are smearing the arrows."

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The poison was not so thick as yet but what it adhered evenly to their arrow-points when rubbed on with a piece of skin. The arrow-heads are made of heavy, hard wood, about six inches long, and tipped with a flat piece of tin, let in, and fastened with gut. These points are made quite separate from the shaft, which consists of a long, light, hollow reed, feathered on one side only, into which the points are inserted when wanted.

When all the arrow-points had been smeared they were laid in the sun to dry, Kert afterwards explaining to me that, though the arrow-heads were exposed to the sun's rays to dry, the poison would not be good if the sun shone on it before it was finished, and that this was one reason why they chose a secluded, shady spot for the ceremony. The mass of poison was then divided, each member of the party—myself among the number—receiving an equal portion. On our way back old Kert had ample opportunity of expatiating on the virtues of the poison first, and next of himself.

"See, Sieur, Kert has kept his word, and has shown you everything, just as I promised before leaving England. Bushmen would never have let you see them mix this poison if it had not been for me;" and he went on to explain how the process is kept a great secret, which only the heads of families are permitted to know, meeting once a year to mix the ingredients that they have collected during the interval. Even their own women are not allowed to be present on these occasions, but stay at home to prepare the honey-beer for the men to drink when their work is over.

I had a shrewd suspicion that old Kert mentioned the honey-beer as a feeler—with an eye perhaps to

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Cango brandy as a good substitute—for he went on to urge that he had had great difficulty in inducing the Bushmen to let me into the secret, but had prevailed upon them by giving me a good character. "They would never have done so for an Englishman—for they fear the Englishman, who looks upon them as nobody—much less for a Boer, who treats them as dogs. But you, Sieur, have treated us as men, and you never need have any fear to trust yourself with the Bushmen now."

No doubt Kert's statements may have been as near the truth as a Bastard ever yet succeeded in getting; indeed I had heard in many other quarters that the mode of preparing the poison was a profound secret, and even Jan, who had been born and brought up in the country, and had had Bushmen servants, admitted he did not know, and that he did not think any one else did. But I turned a deaf ear to all Kert's blandishments, and ignored all reference to "honey-beer" or any other intoxicants. Curiously enough, however, any anticipations he may have formed were to be unexpectedly realized, for when the hunters returned just before sundown Klas gladdened the Bushmen's hearts by reporting that he had found a wild-bees' nest in a bush about an hour's walk from the camp. All the other news seemed to pale before this piece of intelligence. The foot-hunters sang very small, for they had brought home nothing except reports of having seen ostriches and lions; but even the five gems-bok and six hartebeeste which the horse-men had killed did not seem to excite so much interest among the Bushmen as the idea of getting honey.

"Are you sure, Klas," said I, "that it is a bees' nest, and not a wasps'?"

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"Yes, Sieur, it is a bees', and there is plenty of honey. I'll show Sieur where it is, and then he can see for himself. We find them in aard-vark holes, in hollow trees, and clefts of rocks, and sometimes hanging from a bush, or a limb of a tree, or even from a projecting rock in the mountains, the comb quite open, and the bees clustering outside."

This was something so entirely new to me that I made Klas take me next morning to the spot, while the Bushmen organized a bee-hunt. Taking a little water in a broken ostrich eggshell, they placed it near a bunch of flowers, and watched for the bees coming to drink. The thirsty insects are always on the look-out for water, and as soon as one finds it he quenches his thirst and goes off to call his friends and neighbours to the spot. It was not long before first singly, and then in twos and threes, and lastly in dozens, the bees came and settled on the top of the eggshell, which one of the Bushmen then took up and held aloft as he slowly followed the direction in which the insects took their flight. Sometimes the eggshell was completely covered with a crowd of bees, while others clustered around, struggling to get a sip, and then darted off homewards. In this way we quickly discovered that there were four distinct flights, the thickest of which the water-bearer followed, while others were told off to track out the others. This was now no very difficult task, for the bees were so thick that their flight could be traced by the sound of their humming. At last we came to a wait-a-bit bush, round which clustered myriads of bees, just as if they were "swarming" there; but the Bushmen said there was a comb inside. They did not take any notice of us, so after watching them for a bit I took a bunch of grass and set fire to

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it, causing a dense smoke to arise under them. This had the desired effect. Those outside became stupefied and fell down, while the others, filling themselves with honey, offered no resistance as I reached carefully into the bush, so as to avoid disturbing them, and at the same time to prevent the terrible thorns from tearing my hands. The combs, seven in number, hung crossways from the branches, the middle ones the longest, and the others growing shorter the nearer they came to the outside. Both honeycomb and honey were as white as snow.

It must have been a young swarm, as there were no young bees, and the comb was new, never having had a brood in to discolour it. I gathered up some of the bees and put them into a hollow reed, but, unfortunately, was not able to secure the queen. One or two stung me, but they did not seem so pugnacious as the American bee, though their stings were equally long, and gave quite as much pain. The Bushmen paid no attention to the stings they received as they plunged their arms into the bushes and broke down the comb, and in a very short time all four nests were robbed of their store. The honey was poured into a leather bag, but the comb containing the young bees they ate, comb and all, the juice from the chrysalides, as they crushed them beneath their teeth, running down the corners of their mouths like thick yellow cream. Korap brought me a piece, which I, in turn, handed to Lulu; but the idea was enough for him, and he turned away, saying, "I draw the line at maggots, although good sweet ones may not be bad."

"Yes, my boy; but what about cheese-maggots? What is the odds what you eat, provided there is no unpleasant taste to it and it isn't poisonous? I'm going

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to try it, and if I don't like the taste there is no law to compel me to swallow it. What do you say, 'I'll-vatch-it'?"

"Yah! dere is no some laws here; all mans can vat he likes do. How you likes it? gut? yah! den I vill it ead myselfs." And we both ate it, and found no bad taste; rather the contrary, it was very rich, something like cream sweetened with honey. Lulu turned his back, and muttered something about waiting and taking his maggots, civilized and tame, in cheese when he returned home.

As soon as they got back to camp, the Bushmen commenced to get some sama boiled, to make water for their honey-beer, so I consulted Jan as to the advisability of taking their arms away from them, for fear of their getting drunk and quarrelsome, or what is just as bad, careless; but he did not think it necessary, as he said that when they were drunk they let off the steam by singing and dancing; instead of being quarrelsome when in their cups, it was the only time they were happy and goodnatured. But I thought otherwise, and told Kert he must get their bows and arrows and all spare cartridges and powder from them; their guns would be harmless, if we had the ammunition in the waggon.

Gathering and boiling the sama took them the best part of the night, and then, taking my large zinc pails and their calabashes, they mixed the honey and sama-water in them, and next day put them in the sun to ferment. By the evening there were signs of fermentation, and at once they began drinking. The Bastards joined them, and it seemed an even thing who would burst first, pouring down this sickly sweet slush until their stomachs were as round and hard as drums. They drank hard all that night without any

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inebrious effects, and began again at sunrise on the morrow, continuing till about nine o'clock at night, when, having made a second fire just outside their own camp, they began to show signs of drunkenness. Soon they were on their feet, laughing, dancing, and singing, their drunken howls making the night hideous as they staggered around the fire, narrowly escaping falling into it every now and then. If there had been any hyenas or jackals looking on, how proud they must have felt by comparison, and how they must have laughed at the idea of man's superiority. The semi-civilized were as bad as the savage—all alike slaves of the god Bacchus, under whose brutal banner they had enrolled themselves as volunteers, and at whose feet they became fanatical worshippers of the most beastly and cruel of the mythological gods.

The strangest part about their proceedings was that their legs did not get drunk! There could be no affinity between this intoxicant and American "tangle-leg" (whisky), for when their heads lost their balance, their legs succeeded in keeping the body in equilibrium, and they danced and stamped and yelled and gesticulated for hours, without any signs of exhaustion or heaviness, except that they seemed to have less control of their necks, the muscles of which became more rigid as their excitement increased. The half-breeds bore the palm for strength of lung and jumping power. The savage was "not in it" with them. His was a more measured "fixity of purpose" craze, and would no doubt last longer; but some time after midnight I thought it had lasted long enough. If they were left to finish the brew, they never would get sober, so I devised a scheme for drawing the curtain upon their drunken orgie. Calling "I'll-vatch-it" on one side, I

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told him to go and pour out every drop of the honey-beer, while Lulu and I made a search for any arms that old Kert might have overlooked. This we did very cautiously, in order not to excite their suspicions. "I'll-vatch-it" performed his part most cleverly, by pretending to drink with them and knocking over the calabashes with his feet as he danced around, and presently calling upon Lulu and dragging him into their midst and making him join the revels. Kert, Klas, Dirk, and Jan welcomed him with fervour, and insisted on his singing and dancing with them—an opportunity which he turned to the best advantage by kicking over every calabash that came in his way.

The old rascal Kert had never touched a bow or arrow. There they were, just as the men had left them, lying about on the ground, near the fire. Hastily gathering up the arrows, I thrust them under my coat, leaving the bows where they were, so as to prevent suspicion, in case any of them should happen to go to their camp for anything.

Having hidden the arrows in my waggon I took another turn, and found their guns, with plenty of ammunition! These being too much for me to conceal about me I dug a hole in the sand, and buried cartridge-belts, powder-horns, and all. Still the dance continued, but the voices were getting weaker, and the stamping less vigorous. Jan and Kert had quitted the circle, and searched among the empty calabashes, and, finding no more beer, blamed the Bushmen for not having "drunk fair;" but they soon sank on the sand, and their example was followed by the others, one after the other, till at daybreak all was peace. There they lay, utterly exhausted, in a sort of comatose state, neither dead nor alive, for hours. Jan and Kert

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were the first to recover, and came and begged me to give them each a bottle of eau-de-Cologne to sober off on. The Bushmen slept on nearly the whole day, and were sorely disappointed when they woke to find the calabashes empty. No doubt the orgie would have lasted several days longer if I had not taken summary measures to put an end to it, and I was congratulating myself on the peaceful termination of the festivities, when an incident occurred which turned our comedy into a tragedy. The men all seemed to have fully well slept off the effects of the exhaustion and stimulant, when we observed some smoke curling up over the grassy waves, some distance off, a little to the northward of some sand-dunes; so I sent Swaar, Dirk, Klas, and Nef Klas to see what it was, and at the same time to collect sama. They had been gone three or four hours, and Lulu, "I'll-vatch-it," Jan, and I, were in the waggon having dinner, when a cup of coffee, which I was about to drink, was knocked out of my hand, and fell on "I'll-vatch-it," who, in jumping up, kicked down the board that served the purpose of a table, scattering its contents. We all crowded quickly to one side, to avoid the scalding water, and at that moment an arrow passed through the waggon-cover at the very spot where I had been sitting a moment before. In an instant we were out of the waggon, gun in hand. Jan, who had been standing outside, with one foot on the step attached to the fore-wheel, cried out, "Quick, Sieur!" and pointed towards a bush, behind which I saw a Bushman with a bow in his hand, and an arrow drawn to the head. Instantly I thought of the smoke we had seen in the distance. Raising my rifle, I fired just as Jan shouted, "No, Sieur, don't!" But it was too late, the Bushman rolled over in the sand.

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"He is not shooting at you, Sieur, it's at old Kert. See, he is under my waggon now; I'll soon stop it," said Jan, as he ran towards them. But before he could get there bang! went another gun—from the end of Jan's waggon—and out jumped Hom Pete, and ran towards the Bushman. We all followed him, and there lay the man I had shot at as dead as lead.

"Where are the others?" I asked, looking around, thinking it curious that we should have been attacked by a single Bushman, and then Pete explained that it was no enemy, but a "friend" that we had killed. The Bushmen had accused Kert of taking away their arrows and drinking their beer, and words ran high between them, until it came to blows, when Kert knocked over one of them, who immediately commenced shooting at him with some arrows he had concealed in a bush. Kert dodged back towards our waggon, and it was one of the arrows that had missed him that struck our waggon. After I had knocked him over, thinking we were attacked, and while we were running towards Kert, the Bushman regained his feet, and fired again at Kert, who had taken refuge under the other waggon. On this, Pete, also thinking he was attacked, fired, and sent a bullet between the Bushman's eyes, putting a complete and sudden end to his revenge.

The other Bushmen quietly picked up their comrade, pushed his body into an aardvark-hole hard by, and commemorated the event by eating as hearty a meal as if nothing unusual had occurred. But I felt what a sad ending it was to their so-called pleasure. Jan was not friendly with Kert afterwards, and frequently warned me not to trust him, as he was a "bad, treacherous man."

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The man had scarcely been buried when Dirk and the rest returned, and reported that the smoke we had seen proceeded from a large skerm of Vaalpens, or Kattea, one of whom accompanied them, in order to fetch away a dog they had sold him in exchange for gems-bok skins. So I determined to break camp, and trek across next day, to see these people, whom we had so recently suspected of hostile intent!

There were about a hundred of them, living in a collection of thirty semicircular huts, composed of a few sticks driven into the ground, and covered with grass, the side facing the east being left open. There was plenty of baked sama about, piled in shells of tortoises, in almost every hut, and besides scores of ostrich eggs—apparently used as water-vessels. Here and there a skin could be seen on the ground, forming a bed, but in most cases the inmates slept on the bare sand. As we rode through their straggling settlement the young girls and children—who were quite naked—would either hide behind the huts, or pull anything they could get hold of over them; but the women, who wore a narrow piece of skin, hanging in front from a belt round their waists, and in one or two cases a second piece of skin suspended behind, watched us with a vacant stare. Some of the elder ones were hideous, and all were filthy dirty. The black dirt was fairly caked all over them, though here and there, where a piece had peeled off, we could see the natural colour of their skins—a rich *café-au-lait* tint. With all their filth they were not proof against the little feminine weakness for finery, and young and old, all alike, wore bangles on their arms and ankles, and some cowries, hanging from their short, woolly locks, over their foreheads.

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CHAPTER XXI.

The Vaalpens or Kattea tribe—A "Christian" Kaffir—Whitewashing the darkies—A drink of nectar—A Kattea hunt—Running short of provisions—In the slave-market—Upington our pole-star—Bitten by a snake—A new mountain—A wonderful wall—An archæological discovery—Collecting water-insects—A bird's-nesting snake—Our laundry—In straits for want of food and water—A moonlight scene—A fresh team—A lucky find—Death of "Lady Anna"—Bitten by a snake—*Similia similibus curantur.*

RIDING up to a grove of k'gung-trees, we pitched our camp beneath their grateful shade, and where we found three black men, two of whom were dressed like Europeans. One of them spoke Afrikander, the other Bechuana.

These were the *quasi*-owners of this nomadic tribe, whom they styled Vaalpens, though the natives called themselves Kattea—the name by which Jan and Kert knew them. The third man, in all the majesty of his black skin, was their servant, a Balala, and a splendid specimen too. The chief of the tribe was away with all his men hunting in the veldt, and these Kaffirs were awaiting their return in order to purchase the skins of any animals they might kill. This was a standing arrangement between them, the Kaffirs saying that the tribe was perfectly satisfied to give them all their skins so long as they were kept supplied with guns and ammunition, and were allowed to retain all the meat, the only part of the game that they set any value on.

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The chief of the tribe, they added, had three wives and sixteen children, but the others were only allowed one wife.

While we were talking several of the women had followed us, so Lulu, hoping to get a photograph of them, set up his camera, but as soon as he put the black cloth over it, and pointed the lens towards them, they ran away. In order to restore confidence, I

KATTEA TRIBE.

walked about and presented all the women I could find with a new pipe and a piece of tobacco, which they accepted very suspiciously. Entering into conversation with them, I asked whether they would sell me a dozen of the ostrich eggs I had seen in their tents. Hereupon one of the swell Kaffirs looked in and asked if I had any gun-caps. On my replying in the affirmative he said he would let me have twelve eggs for a box full of

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caps. The women did not quite seem willing for him to sell them, but he paid very little attention to their objections, and the bargain was soon struck. By this time we had managed to get a few of the women grouped together, and Lulu succeeded in getting a picture of them.

Having given me all the information he could, the black proprietor of this tribe, taking a small book out of a bag, opened it and commenced to sing hymns—an accomplishment he seemed very proud of. On looking at the book I ascertained that it was one of Dr. Moffat's. The owner was one of Moffat's black Christians, and seemed to possess all the self-righteousness of white ones. To prove his Christian charity he asked us if we did not want some young girls, and actually offered me four girls and two pack-oxen for one of my repeating rifles.

With feelings of gratitude for his kind offer, we told him we were not buying girls that day, and bidding him good-evening, ordered supper.

Next day this Christian and highly-moral Kaffir came to complain that my men had been making too free with the Vaalpen women, and foretold trouble if it came to the knowledge of their absent husbands. I then discovered that the Bushmen and Bastards, finding the men-folk of the village did not return, had very thoughtfully offered to take their place, and had spent the night at the Vaalpen camp. This, said the virtuous Kaffir, with an air of all the righteous indignation that black clothes and hymn-books could lend, was highly improper, and might lead to unpleasant consequences when it came to the knowledge of the absent and wronged husbands. Of course I could not deny the impropriety of the proceeding; but I had my

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doubts about the sincerity of the warning that harm might come of it, believing that more jealousy was likely to be kindled in the breasts of the two Kaffirs by the fear that we should alienate the tribe from their *quasi*-allegiance than in the breasts of all the male members of the tribe put together. So I went over to the Vaalpens' camp, and found some of my men still there, on the most intimate terms of friendship with the womenkind, their attentions having evidently been received most affectionately. It was clear that there had been no coercion or threats; on the contrary, what I saw while passing one skerm showed that their advances had been rather encouraged than discountenanced, and satisfied me that there would be no reason for being anxious about a collision, unless the Kaffirs themselves encouraged it by poisoning the minds of the hunters against us on their return—or unless the men actually found my people dallying with their fickle-minded dusky drudges. All alike were interested in guarding against the latter contingency; and, to provide against the former, it was clearly only necessary to excite the Kaffirs' cupidity. Calling them aside, I gave them to understand that we had no intention of alienating the tribe from them, and that we would only stay a day or two longer, when we would give them a present, the value of which would depend entirely on the way we were treated. This was quite enough. The prospect of gain so completely altered their view of my men's wrong-doing, that they became blind to the impropriety of their proceedings.

On returning to the waggons after having thus satisfactorily whitewashed the dark-skins, I met two girls, each carrying an ostrich shell and a small tube made of a length of stick-grass, and bending over the grass

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as if in search of something. My efforts to ask them what they were doing resulted only in their offering us a drink from the ostrich shells, which were about half-full of water; and after taking a sip or two out of courtesy, I renewed my pantomimic inquiry. At first they only smiled—whether out of sheer amusement at my action, or in amazement at my unquenchable curiosity, or out of pity for my seeming ignorance, was a conundrum that I could not guess, so I "gave it up," as the "end man" in the negro minstrels says. However, after walking along together a little way, each maiden in turn stealing a timid, sly glance at me, which would have been quite fetching if they had only been of a paler cast of colour, and had not given off so strong an odour, they stopped and commenced their work again. Both went down on their knees, bending their lithe, well-shaped bodies forward as if to show themselves off to the best advantage. Ah! I thought, a woman is a woman all the world over. Whether savage or civilized, they all have their coy, soft, cunning, tempting ways. The sly pussies all understand how to purr and to keep their claws sheathed in velvet, until they have caught their mouse, though sometimes the mouse turns out to be a big rat, and takes them all their time to subdue him. And what do you suppose my two black Venuses were doing? Another conundrum: and one that a whole State of Yankees could not guess, so I will tell you. They were sucking up the large drops of dew that lay between the green, fan-shaped leaves of the bulbs and other plants; and when the tube was full they put the lower end into the eggshell, and by blowing forced the contents out of the tube into the shell. This made me wonder if the two mouthfuls I had taken when they

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handed me the shell had been in their mouths first—or only into the tube.

Kert had told me that the Vaalpens buried ostrich eggs full of water—in hundreds—at various points, in case of drought or lack of sama. Could it be possible that they got all their store of water in this way, instead of collecting it from pools or pans in the rainy season? On further inquiry I found that as long as there is sama to be had they never drink from their store, but the young people go out and collect dew every morning as industriously as a flock of humming-birds. The twelve shells I had bought were filled—no doubt in the same manner; but this knowledge I kept to myself, for I knew that Lulu would be a little squeamish about drinking second-hand water.

Next day the Kattea hunters returned—nearly empty-handed—but reporting a large herd of gems-bok close to the camp. So on the morrow we joined forces, and accompanied them on a grand hunting expedition. The attack was a well-organized, pre-concerted plan, very unsportsmanlike perhaps, but productive of the best results so far as the "butcher's bill" was concerned—and this was the first consideration. A circle having been formed, the movements of the hunters were guided by signs from the Kattea chief, and the belt of hunters gradually closed upon the poor bewildered animals, till they did not know which way to turn, and nearly half of them were slaughtered before they made a break through our line. The Kattea never touched an animal until our people had taken what they required, and then they set to work with a will, some skinning, some making fires, while others went after the women and children,

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who came down in a body, and in three hours had a new city of huts built on the spot.

Such feasting, such gourmandizing, such gluttony followed as never was equalled. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that some of them, during the night, put away at least thirty pounds of meat each. Eat a while and sleep a while was their motto; and this was faithfully practised throughout the next day. And yet all this overloading seemingly had no evil effects. Meanwhile all our party set to work to prepare a stock of biltong, and Jan's heart was rejoiced by seeing his waggon loaded as full as it would hold. My stores, however, were decreasing very fast, owing to the constant begging of the lazy Bastards. We could not eat anything, or take an article out of our trunks, even to clothing, without their begging. Our rice was nearly all gone, but "I'll-vatch-it" reckoned that the coffee and sugar and the cracked wheat (if limited to us three whites) would hold out till we reached Upington.

The mention of Upington was like balm of Gilead to Lulu's ears. It was, for the present, his pole-star. "Now," said he, when I gave orders to inspan and make our course for that place, "now the pole of the waggon is pointing the right way, and I don't wish to see it changed until we get out of this."

Just as we were preparing to leave the chief came up, with one of his wives and four children—one a daughter full grown—whom he offered me in exchange for one of my rifles. Not wishing to refuse him, I made Kert explain that I could not spare one just then, but that when we had finished hunting, which would be in a short time, he should have one. He expressed his delight by saying he would die for me,

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and asked me to come and live with him, and make his people my people; they should hunt for me, and all his daughters should be my wives. If only the sanctimonious Kaffir had heard this! Then he went away, telling Kert that his people would be delighted to hear that I would come back amongst them. But the women and children stayed behind, and made themselves quite at home, just as if they belonged to our party, some squatting down before our fire, others helping to inspan the oxen, and altogether accepting the position quite cheerfully. But here, as elsewhere, "the best of friends must part," and after a distribution of handkerchiefs wherewith to dry their tears, and tobacco wherewith to solace themselves for our loss—not forgetting, of course, the present promised to the psalm-singing Kaffir—we bade them adieu.

While running down a sand-dune I nearly stepped on a snake, which, like a flash, struck my foot. Before it could strike again my heel was on it and I crushed it into the sand. Hardly waiting to see whether it was *hors de combat*, I hastily pulled off my shoe to see if its fangs had pierced my foot. Luckily the leather was stout, for there were two deep scratches where the sharp teeth had struck. Its will was good, but it had not succeeded in the attempt. The fangs, which were half an inch in length, and the poison-ducts were added to my collection. The snake was of the kind which the Bushmen call *veldt slange*, about three feet long and an inch in diameter. The colour was greyish-brown, with a white belly.

Going further south, the trees became more and more scanty. On the second day we sighted a high mountain, which Jan thought was the Ki Ki Mountain on the Nosob River. But we were not far enough

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south for that, and on reaching the foot of it, it turned out to be one that nobody seemed to have ever seen or heard of. We camped near the foot of it, beside a long line of stone which looked like the Chinese Wall after an earthquake, and which, on examination, proved to be the ruins of quite an extensive structure, in some places buried beneath the sand, but in others fully exposed to view. We traced the remains for nearly a mile, mostly a heap of huge stones, but all flat-sided, and here and there with the cement perfect and plainly visible between the layers. The top row of stones were worn away by the weather and the drifting sands, some of the uppermost ones curiously rubbed on the underside and standing out like a centre-table on one short leg.

The general outline of this wall was in the form of an arc, inside which lay at intervals of about forty feet apart a series of heaps of masonry in the shape of an oval or an obtuse ellipse, about a foot and a half deep, and with a flat bottom, but hollowed out at the sides for about a foot from the edge. Some of these heaps were cut out of solid rock, others were formed of more than one piece of stone, fitted together very accurately. As they were all more or less buried beneath the sand, we made the men help to uncover the largest of them with the shovels—a kind of work they did not much like—and found that where the sand had protected the joints they were quite perfect. This took nearly all one day, greatly to Jan's disgust: he could not understand wasting time uncovering old stones; to him it was labour thrown away. I told him that here must have been either a city or a place of worship, or the burial-ground of a great nation, perhaps thousands of years ago.

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"Yah! Sieur, that may be; but it's no good to us; we cannot carry the stones with us, and could not sell them if we could. Besides, we want to get home to our wives." Virtuous Bastards! their wives were of more interest to them than antiquities; and now that they had once started they were anxious to get home, especially as, having plenty of meat and skins, they would be received with open arms. When we told Jan that we would remain another day or two to explore the place, he said he knew his people would not dig any more, and doubted if they would even stay.

RUINS ON THE KALAHARI DESERT.

But when he found out that we did not care whether he and his people went or not, and that, as for the digging, we were independent—we could do that ourselves, much better and quicker—he said if we were foolish enough to dig after a lot of old rocks, he could not prevent us; but, while we were wasting our strength, he would go hunting.

So the next day we had it all to ourselves, and the discoveries we made amply repaid us for our labours. On digging down nearly in the middle of the arc, we came upon a pavement about twenty feet wide, made of large stones. The outer stones were long ones,

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and lay at right angles to the inner ones. This pavement was intersected by another similar one at right angles, forming a Maltese cross, in the centre of which at one time must have stood an altar, column, or some sort of monument, for the base was quite distinct, composed of loose pieces of fluted masonry. Having searched for hieroglyphics or inscriptions, and finding none, Lulu took several photographs and sketches, from which I must leave others more learned on the subject than I to judge as to when and by whom this place was occupied. For myself, I have ventured to sum up my conclusions on the subject in the following verses:—

A half-buried ruin—a huge wreck of stones
On a lone and desolate spot;
A temple—or a tomb for human bones
Left by man to decay and rot.

Rude sculptured blocks from the red sand project,
And shapeless uncouth stones appear,
Some great man's ashes designed to protect,
Buried many a thousand year.

A relic, may be, of a glorious past,
A city once grand and sublime,
Destroyed by earthquake, defaced by the blast,
Swept away by the hand of time.

It was not till three days after leaving the ruins—travelling all the way over a gentle slope—that we came to the Ki Ki Mountain. Here we found a vley with a considerable quantity of muddy water in it, evidently the result of quite recent rains, yet, strange as it may appear, there were water-insects in it—one, a brown bug, very quick in its motions, darting here and there, which when caught was so slippery that it could hardly be retained in the fingers even after death. I also secured a specimen of a small fish-shaped animal, which was duly put into alcohol

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along with the beetle. All round the pool we found the footprints of baboons, some as large as the foot-marks of a ten-year-old child, for which I at first mistook them. Close by was a tree with a large nest of the sociable fink or grosbeak. Here Kert called my attention to a large yellow snake, as it hung with its tail coiled around a branch on the roof of the nest, poking his head up into the little chambers and stealing the eggs and young birds. Hundreds of the little community were flying at it, pecking it, and chattering like crazed old women. After watching it for some time I saw it strike one of the birds that ventured too close, and which fluttered to the ground and seemed to die before it fell. Then I raised my rifle and fired, and down tumbled the brazen serpent, and lay under the tree on a pile of guano. It measured seven feet four inches. Its head was flat, and the body, tapering gradually from the middle to the two extremities, was at no place larger than my wrist. I found in its inside thirty-four little snow-white eggs, as perfect as when they were in the nest. Its poisonous fangs were nine-sixteenths of an inch long, with three others formed ready to take their place. The poison-ducts, which I preserved, were an inch and a quarter long. Was it instinct that had taught him how to rob the birds, or had he, while watching the nest from the ground, and seeing the birds fly in and out, quietly reasoned out the best way of getting at the nest, and then coolly climbed up the tree and put it into practice?

Making the most of the unaccustomed luxury of a pool of water, we once more enjoyed the delight of a real swim, after having been many months without one; and in a few hours after our arrival the bushes were covered with our "washing." Our oxen had

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been so long used to eating sama that they would not drink the water at all, and the horses but sparingly; but, after being kept two days without either sama or water, they changed their minds and had a good fill before we started again. Leaving the vley, we followed the dry, sandy river-bed for a couple of days,

THE FIRST BATH FOR MANY MONTHS.

and then struck the level, smooth road, bearing the fresh track of several waggons, which Jan recognized, by the peculiar footmarks of one of the oxen, as that of a caravan belonging to the Verlanders on its way back to Mier. This was a bad look-out for us. We had only a hogshead of water collected from the vley at Ki-Ki, and

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that hogshead I had had to fill myself, for the lazy Bastards refused to do so, saying we should be sure to get plenty of sama and find other pans on the way; and here we were, five or six days from Mier, and with no end of cattle perhaps clearing up everything in the shape of drink and fodder in front of us. I sent out Jan and the Bastards as scouts on horseback to look for sama, but two evenings they returned saying they could see none.

The oxen were nearly dead beat; but, unless they kept it up, the only alternatives before us were to abandon everything or perish: we might abandon everything first and perish after. The Bastards were almost mutinous when I put them on short water rations again, and Lulu, "I'll-vatch-it," and I had to take it in turns to keep guard over the water-barrel, gun in hand. We drove all night, outspanning every two hours to give the poor brutes time to lie down; but sometimes they had not strength to get up again, and we had to shoot several of them as they lay. My mare Lady Anna was almost a skeleton, getting weaker and weaker every hour, but I could not bring myself to shoot her too, hoping to get water and forage yet. I gave her some oatmeal mixed with water, which she drank with despair in her drooping eyes, her weary head resting on my shoulder. Fortunately, the nights were cool, causing the humidity in the air to condense, and loading the long grass with dew-drops which sparkled like diamonds in the morning sun—liquid gems that were far more valuable than all the diamonds of South Africa, for without them neither horses nor cattle could have gone on another day.

On the fourth night we were labouring slowly along, the long, merciless whip cracking incessantly in the crisp night air, through which the moon shed a flood

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of light, "I'll-vatch-it" snoring at my elbow as I sat beside the water-barrel, when my head, which had been nodding lower and lower, came in sharp contact with the barrel. Jumping up, I heard strange voices, and shouting to Andreas, who was driving, asked who was there. As I spoke, Cann, my old acquaintance at Kuis, came forward.

"Is there water? Is there sama?" I eagerly asked.

"So little that I must move on to-morrow early," he replied. "I have just come from a well at the Oup river, where a Jew trader from Damaraland, named Boll, has camped, with 1000 oxen; they have nearly cleared the sama out, and that's why I came this way."

Worse and worse! Was my luck going to forsake me at last? Was my star setting? Not only Verlander's team, but a big drove of cattle in front of me, clearing everything up; not a bit or sup would be left for my weary, half-starved beasts. And, as if to mock me in my despair, Cann told me that close to the road we had come along Verlander had found sama in quantities, and had told him where to look for it. Those lazy brutes, Jan and the rest, had actually been too idle to search for the sama, or, if they had found it, too pig-headed to come back and say so. At that moment Jan came along as cool as a cucumber, and asked me for water to make a little coffee for his men. Instead of giving him water, it was with the greatest difficulty that I refrained from kicking him; my toes itched to do it, but I didn't, giving vent to my indignation by using some very strong language instead, which caused him to sneak away like a dog with his tail between his legs.

"I see," said Cann, "you know how to handle them; he deserved a thrashing, which he would have

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had if I had been in your place. You must report him to Verlander, who is the only Bastard I ever knew that had any pluck in him."

Cann was off on a hunting expedition with ten Bushmen hunters and some Bastards. "They *are* hunters," he added significantly; "not such a cowardly lot as your fellows;" and so, after an interchange of information and good wishes, we parted, he going north and I continuing my journey southwards towards Mier. At daylight we arrived at the mouth of the Oup river, where we found Boll, with a lot of cattle, which he had undertaken to drive right across the desert to Kuruman, *en route* to Kimberley. Those that had taken kindly to the sama looked well, but others were skin and bone. Some he had shot that morning to put them out of their misery; but a lot of them had stampeded, either from fear of the lions, or from a sudden desire—common among these Damara cattle—to return home. The loss of half his drove, however, had but little effect upon his good-humour, and he was very friendly and talkative. He told us that on the sands, about two days to the east, his men had found sama in abundance, and that he was going to send the rest of his cattle to feed there, while he went to Mier and procured horsemen to take up the spoor of the runaways, and recover what had not died or been eaten up by the lions. We outspanned while his men showed us where there was a little sama left—enough to save their lives—and the day's rest and food were very welcome to both man and beast, before starting through the succession of steep sandhills that ran right up to Mier. It was a question whether we should pull through after all, and I was delighted when Boll took a fancy to my rifles, of which he bought two in

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exchange for ten oxen each. That night we started for the sands, but about half-way up one of the sand-hills the oxen refused to move. It was cruel the way they were beaten, and I made "I'll-vatch-it" lay the whip aside while they had a rest. But on trying them again they still failed to move the waggon, so we had to inspan some of the newly-purchased beasts. They had not been worked for some months—if at all—and were so wild that it was impossible to get them yoked in the moonlight, and we had to wait where we were till day dawned. Then by dint of shouts and whips we got the cattle into harness, and induced them to apply their rude, untutored strength in a scientific manner, and with frequent pauses hauled the waggons over one sand-dune after another. The sand was so deep that it was almost as hard work to pull them downhill as uphill, and in some cases it took as many as forty oxen to move each of them. This severe work told heavily against the half-starved members of our original teams, several of which refused to go any further, and had to be shot. One went mad, and rushed headlong at the waggon, making it pretty lively for us before he was killed.

About midnight the oxen gave out again, and Hom Pete, after outspanning, came and said that we had better leave the waggons here and drive the oxen on—or let them go altogether—and proceed on foot as fast as we could to Mier. To this proposition I said, "Nay, we will pull through if it takes every ox. Never despair, Pete, we shall manage yet."

Just before day, while I was sitting by the camp fire, brooding over the possibilities of the morrow, one of the Bushmen came and touched me on the shoulder, and handed me a half-grown sama, of which he had a

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large bunch, at the same time pointing in the direction where he had found them. This was a piece of luck. Without waking any of the others, I helped him drive the oxen to it—at least as many as we could, for there were some that we could not make get up, even by resorting to the cruel device of biting the tail —and, leaving them there to feed, we collected as many as we could carry and returned to the waggons loaded with the young melons. What a pleasure it was next morning to see the astonishment pictured on every face, as we displayed the pile of samas! What a transformation scene! smiling hope gradually overpowering sad despair. All was joy again; even the oxen lost their sad looks; but poor Lady Anna never reached the oasis of sama. The Bushman allowed her to lie down, and no amount of persuasion could induce her to get up again, so he shot her. I had anticipated this, and when I saw him coming down the hill without her I involuntarily turned away, not wishing to hear what the poor thing suffered. My reason had told me some days before that it would be less cruel to kill her than to keep her lingering on, but my heart had prompted me to put off the evil day, and now that the end had come I felt a kind of self-reproach. I had not only prolonged her misery, but had cheated the hungry vultures out of a feast, for now there was nothing but skin and bone left for them.

Unluckily starvation was not the only thing that threatened us. Three of the oxen were bitten by snakes. One of the Bushmen undertook to cure them, and, taking a knife, made one or two slight incisions round the place where the bite was, which was easily seen by the swelling, and rubbed in a powder which he said was made from the dried poison-

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sacs of another snake. In a few hours the swelling had entirely subsided, and the cattle were as well as their half-starved state would allow them to be. I expressed some doubt whether this "cure" would be efficacious in the case of the more deadly kind of snake, but the Bushman assured me that it would, and that he was not afraid of being bitten by any snake in the country so long as he had the poison-sac of another snake to use as an antidote.

The very next day I had an opportunity of putting him to the test.

While walking ahead of the waggons I saw a full-grown capell or *spungh slange*, lying under a bank, and, calling the Bushman, said,—

"Catch that snake alive. You are not afraid of it, are you?"

"No, boss," he replied, "I am not afraid, and will catch it for a roll of tobacco."

Not wishing to be accessory to his death, I refused to bribe him, and went to get the driver's whip to kill the snake with. I had scarcely returned when he gave it a kick with his naked foot, and the horrible reptile bit him. Coolly taking out some dried poison-sacs he reduced them to a powder, pricked his foot near the puncture with his knife, and rubbed the virus powder in just as he had done with the cattle. In the meantime I had put a stop to the snake biting any more by a blow from the whip-stock, and the Bushman, extracting the fangs, drank a drop of the poison from the virus-sac, and soon fell into a stupor which lasted some hours. At first the swelling increased rapidly, but after a time it began to subside, and next morning he inoculated himself again. That night the swelling had disappeared, and in four days he was as well as ever.

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CHAPTER XXII.

At Mier again—The private secretary becomes confidential—A war of extermination—Terrible confessions—A trustworthy councillor—A garden at Mier—A fertile soil—The "born-tired" disease—An antidote to snake poison—An enterprising Boer—A Bastard family—Making the calves useful—Exchange and barter—A raid on the water-fowl—K'Abiam Pool.

Two days after, we sighted the habitations of Mier: those apologies for houses, lighted up by the golden rays of the rising sun, were more welcome to the sight than a city of palaces. The tyrant king, Sama, was dethroned: his reign of terror was over. King Water would now rule in his stead, and commenced his reign most auspiciously, all of us revelling in his bounty. We could have passed several days very pleasantly here, had it not been for the constant begging of Dirk Verlander's satellites, who had organized a fearful system of blackmail, under the guise of "presents." Feeling no obligation, I refused to accede to their requests, when they tried to exact it as a right, as a kind of "toll" for my having hunted on what Verlander called "his territory," and for the use of "his water."

The latter claim I recognized, and offered to pay for, but repudiated the other demand, and when he saw that I was in earnest he withdrew all but his demand for "water rates," which I liquidated. Then I gave Mrs. Verlander a pair of very fine bright-coloured blankets, and we became the best of friends.

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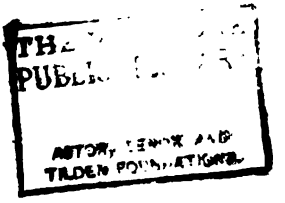

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DIRK VERLANDER AND HIS "GROOT-MEN."

Page 369.

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Halliburton still entertained the idea that I was sent into the country on some secret official mission from the German Government, and, acting on this assumption, he gave me a great deal of information which I should otherwise never have got out of him. He became quite confidential, and taking me into his hut one day, when I was introduced to his Hottentot wife and a family of variegated children, showed me most of his correspondence, particularly that in which he had endeavoured to get from the Colonial Government an official recognition of the Verlanders' right to the territory which they claim. This claim is based partly on the *beati possidentes* principle, and partly on an alleged promise made to Verlander by one Captain Green, who, it is asserted by Verlander, undertook, in the name of the Queen, to have his right acknowledged to the whole territory over which he claims jurisdiction, right down to the Orange River, on condition of his assisting the English against the Korannas during the war against that race. After the war was over, a slice of the Kalahari, bordering the Orange River, and reaching from Griqualand to the Bondel Swartz, and extending northwards into the sand for a distance of about eighty miles on the average, was, it is alleged, given to the Bastards who had assisted the British Government, but the boundaries have never been marked off, nor has Verlander's claim to any other territory ever been admitted, although, as he says, he carried out his part of the compact with Captain Green so faithfully that there are hardly any Korannas left.

In fact he did his work too well, for, to judge by the narratives deliberately told me by Bastards and Englishmen alike, the war was a war of extermination. When any of the unfortunate Korannas were taken

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prisoners by the Bastards they were driven to the slaughter in herds like sheep. The brutes who were in charge of them would shoot them—men, women, and children alike—in cold blood, and then say that they had escaped. These fiends in human shape looked upon the killing of a black with no more compunction than on the destruction of some vermin.

Some of them told me how they themselves had been in charge of some prisoners, and that, having to take them across the river, and not liking the trip, they took the opportunity of drowning them by tying a rope to their hands and dragging them across at their horses' tails. If on pulling them ashore they found any signs of life in them, they stabbed them and pitched them in again. A man, who is now holding office under the Crown, told me he had to take two Bushmen and two Bushwomen as prisoners to some place in the colony. The season was wet and dark, and the journey long and unpleasant, so, as they were not worth so much trouble, he shot them, letting them lie on the veldt, and, returning next day, reported that they had escaped, and on being overtaken had refused to give themselves up, and so he had been obliged to shoot them. No inquiry was ever made into the matter by his superiors, who apparently thought the blacks not good enough for anything like a coroner's inquest. Dozens of similar tales I heard from the very lips of the men who had perpetrated these deeds.

Among other things one of Verlander's councillors showed me an agreement purporting to be made between Verlander and Renz, a representative of a large commercial house in the colony, giving the said Renz the right of buying the whole of the land he claimed to be the ruler of in consideration of Renz agreeing to

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send him a lot of goods, including quantities of guns, powder, caps, and lead, also three thousand sheep—all to be delivered at Orange River, and Verlander to assume all risk of getting it across.

"I made that bargain," said my informant proudly; "and I'm not such a fool as I look. Renz wants to get hold of the country, but I shall take care he does not. To let him have a slice of territory like Rautenbach is one thing, but to part with the whole country is another. Look here," he continued, with an access of confidential fervour. "Look at this and see if they are sharp enough to get over me. If you can induce Germany or England to take the whole of the country over, I'll sell it like a shot, and we will divide the spoils. They must not take me for a flat. I'm not staying here for nothing. Is it a bargain; do we understand one another?"

"Perfectly," I replied; "but you had better drop the subject, for wattle-and-mud walls may have ears as well as stone ones; and if Verlander hears of your kind intentions, you might find that this climate will suddenly become a little too oppressive for one whose feelings are so very delicate."

One day Halliburton took me out to look at his garden, a slovenly-looking affair, inclosed by a brush-fence, with here and there a sickly-looking tobacco-plant, that looked as if it had the jaundice, a scraggy cabbage or two slowly choking to death, and a few peas trying to struggle into—or out of—existence.

"Your gardener has forgotten to give them a drink," I remarked; "he doesn't treat them well; they will be cut off before the 'flower of their youth.'"

"Yes," he replied, "we always cut them before

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they flower, but these are only to try how they will answer before we plant a large space."

"These having done so well, no doubt you will grow more than you require next year."

He had caught the infection of the country, and was too indolent either to care for a few plants himself, or to see that the blacks did it for him. This disease I christened the "African fever"—the Americans call it "born tired." It is from people suffering from this complaint that the information as to the capabilities of a country is taken, and accepted as gospel. This private secretary, though he could not handle a watering-pot, knew how to use an ink-pot. He could write well, and talk like a book. Some of his effusions he showed me, in the form of letters that had appeared in the colonial newspapers relative to the way the country was governed, and its resources. From his standpoint they carried conviction with them, and no doubt answered the purpose for which they were written, viz. to conceal the truth, with the object of keeping the country to themselves.

Seeing some people working on a plot near a big sandhill, I inquired what they were doing. "Only a few Bastards getting the ground ready to sow wheat." This interested me, and I proposed to go over and see how they did it. He tried to dissuade me by saying it was too far and too hot for either of us to walk; but as I insisted on going he accompanied me. The sandy clay mixture had been stirred about with a very primitive kind of a plough, and was to be sown with wheat—a very slow process, as the sowers made the seed go as far as they could, not putting more than a peck to the acre, and taking care that two did not lie near enough together to crowd one another. To my

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question whether the wheat would cover the ground sufficiently to prevent the sun from drying it out, they replied that it stooled out, and often yielded as many as 600 kernels to a single root. This staggered me, for the ground looked anything but fertile, and, looking at the length of time during which no rain fell, it did not seem possible. But they assured me it was a fact, which they proved by showing me a single root from last year's stubble which had twelve stalks. If each stalk had an ear, and each ear fifty grains (and they say that an ear often has seventy), this would be 600 fold—a marvellous yield.

The wheat they were sowing had grown on the same ground the year before, and was the most beautiful sample I ever saw in any country—plump, white, and even, with very thin skin. I managed to secure a couple of quarts of it as a sample.

Any of the Bastards were allowed to till here, and yet there were not more than a dozen small allotments taken up, the whole area ploughed not being more than five acres. Yet they complained how hard they had to work to get a little bread-stuff. I pitied the poor, over-worked fellows. It was terrible—twelve of them being obliged to cultivate and harvest at least five acres every year! But I could not suggest any means of alleviation, and told them that if they would eat bread they must continue to suffer. It was only one more case of "born tired."

On our way back the secretary said that wheat or flour was worth from three to four pounds per muid (100 lbs.), and that, excepting what little was grown here, they never had any bread-stuff from one year's end to another. Save a little coffee now and then, he and his family had lived upon the milk of six cows,

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each rearing a calf at the same time. Providence had indeed served him badly; it had made no special provision for his benefit; "Cape smoke" was too dear for him to drown his troubles in it very often; and even Mother Earth refused to furnish him with a few bushels of ordinary wheat, without being paid in advance a certain amount of labour. This was the tenor of his complaints, and he evidently thought himself an ill-used man. But he soon forgot his troubles, to talk of some of the curiosities of the country. Among other things he asked me if I had come in contact with, or heard of, the little saurian, called the "N'auboo."

"No," I replied; "what is it?"

"It's a specific for snake-bite, or for blood-poisoning, in case of a wound from a poisoned arrow. It is strange you have not heard of it, as every Bastard or native carries it, especially in the hunting veldt. It resembles one of those little lizards (pointing to one of a light-yellow colour, and about seven inches long), except that its legs are not so much developed, yet they move so quick that it's very difficult to catch. It is supposed to be the most deadly of all poisonous reptiles, save the little worm called kameroo. Several have been caught down yonder, in the old huts by the brack-pit. The natives pay a big price for them, often giving an ox for one. There is hardly a Bastard family in this part but what has some N'auboo, in case either man or beast is bitten by a snake. It has never been known to fail."

"How is it used?"

"It is applied in a powdered state, by sprinkling it into some incisions, previously made, near the bite. Even in extreme cases two applications will cause the

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swelling to gradually subside, and a cure is made. It has never been known to fail."

"What do you mean by applying it in a powdered state; what part is powdered?"

"The whole of the N'auboo is dried and then finely powdered, and when put into the wound it acts as a counter-irritant. When they have no N'auboo, the Bastards use the poison of any snake, and place it in an incision made round the bite, one poison working against another."

"Then I should think the best way would be to carry a poisonous reptile with you, and when you happened to be bitten by a poisonous snake you could immediately let your own bite you near the same place, and the two poisons would destroy one another. It's the principle of 'Like cures like'—'*Similia similibus curantur.*'"

"I don't know, Mr. Farini, how that would work; in fact I would rather not try it. But I can assure you that the N'auboo will cure any snake-bite, as I have had many ocular demonstrations of it, and I have no doubt before you leave the country it will come under your personal notice."

"I should be very pleased if it would. I would risk an ox to try the experiment, and I will give a sovereign for one of the little beasts. Don't you know of any one that has some?"

"I cannot recollect at present, but I will make inquiries, and in the meantime will send two boys to try and catch you one."

"Alive?"

"Oh, no, the boys are too much afraid of it for that, although no one has ever been known to be bitten by one. But there is another beast, called the night

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huki, which is very poisonous, though not known to be of any use as an antidote."

"You said there was a small something or other that's still more poisonous: what is that like? and where could I procure a specimen?"

"It's the kameroo, a small worm-like thing that makes a habitation for itself, close to the ground, on the grass, by attaching together small stones by the aid of some sticky substance. If an ox happens to eat one of these little things, it's sure death, and no help for it. When the grass is short there are hundreds of cattle killed every year this way. We are not troubled here with it, but in the lower part of the Kalahari there are more than is pleasant. The Bushmen call it K'ugaa."

We waited another day, in the hope of getting a specimen of the N'auboo, amusing ourselves in the meantime by taking a photograph of Dirk Verlander and his *groot-men;* but as Jan, the veldt cornet, who had offered to accompany us as far as his *werf*, was anxious to get home we could not delay any longer.

Just as we were leaving, an old man brought me a part of a N'auboo, carefully wrapped up in five or six old rags, and stuffed into a metal cartridge-case; there was not much more than the head left, the rest of it having been used in curing his cattle and people of snake-bites. He asked for a little coffee in exchange, which I gladly gave him.

After climbing the steepest sandbanks we had yet encountered, we reached Rautenbach's Pan, where we saw good evidence of the owner's energetic efforts to make the most of the country. The pan was nothing but a dead-level flat when we crossed it; but in the rainy season it is a shallow lake, thirty-five miles long

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WATERING THE CATTLE—A MOONLIGHT SCENE.

Page 377.

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and seven miles wide, and from six inches to two feet deep. At the lower end Rautenbach is making a dam to store the water, and a cutting for irrigation purposes, with a view to cultivating the plain, which he hopes to make productive, though it does not now yield a blade of grass. It took us exactly one hour and forty minutes to cross the dry pan, and when we were over we met one of his waggons returning loaded with salt collected at some salt-pans lying about three days' journey to the east. One of these pans is about one mile and a half long by one mile wide, and the average depth of the salt is six feet. In the dry seasons it is easy to collect it; but in the wet seasons it is saturated with water.

The next place we came to was another immense flat, belonging to Mr. Verlander (son of the captain), with wells and a dam of fresh water, called Schoon Veldt Dam, which might easily be utilized after Rautenbach's plan. Here we watered the cattle by moonlight, the night being so brilliant that Lulu was able to take a photograph of the scene.

The road then led over some very steep sand-dunes and across a hard flat, on which, near a natural dam between sandhills, there were encamped a lot of Bastards on their way into the Kalahari, accompanied by their families, including children, and by Bushmen and Hottentots, with their families and all their worldly possessions, including horses and sheep, cows and calves.

Lulu succeeded in making a capital picture of them; after which they clustered around our waggons, and eagerly asked all kinds of questions about the kinds of game we had shot, and how, when, and where. When we described the giraffe, which does not exist on their

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hunting veldt, and told them we had the heads with us, their curiosity was so thoroughly aroused that they begged us to outspan and show them, which we did. They were disappointed with the heads, but not with the feet, and the idea of getting one ton of meat with one bullet, and soles enough to last them for years, so took their fancy that they were not satisfied till we had given them a full description of the chase.

A BASTARD FAMILY.

Wishing them good luck, we drove on to the foot of another lot of sandhills, arriving at night at Anerougas dam, after having overtaken a Bastard family, who taught us a "wrinkle" in the matter of driving over the steep sandhills. They had twelve milch cows yoked to their waggon, and, when they got stuck in

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the sand, they drove their calves to the top of the hill, when the mothers would redouble their efforts to follow their bleating offspring.

In these sands we found a trailing plant, bearing a bell-shaped flower, with a strong smell of musk, and with roots resembling sweet potatoes, no doubt edible, but never eaten by the natives, as far as I could ascertain. Besides this there was an abundance of a kind of flag, resembling a *fleur-de-lys*, which the natives said was poisonous to cattle, but which fortunately did not seem to grow where the grass and sama throve.

Early next morning we reached the vley, where Jan's werf was located; so I took the opportunity of reminding him that he had not yet paid for a gun he had bought of me, and that the promised cattle in exchange would be very useful to me just now, adding that I should be leaving that same night, and should be glad if he would "settle up" at once.

He professed great willingness to do this, but explained that, unfortunately, his cattle were out on the sands, and might not come to water that day. He would, however, send his *Swaar* for them. The gun stood at the head of his bed, so I picked it up, remarking how well he shot with it; and saying that, as "I'll-vatch-it" and I had had a dispute as to whether it or my repeater had the greatest penetration, I would take it over to my waggon, and test it. In this idea Jan also acquiesced at once. He was in very good humour, and brought his greasy-looking squabby, macaroni-complexioned *vrouw* to be photographed. By the time this was done, Swaar had returned with the cattle, so Jan and I went to look at them. Putting on a sickly smile, he said he was sorry that the drought had taken so many of his

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cattle, or he would have been able to give me the eight oxen as agreed, but as it was he had only two, and those were small; but they were good, and had been broken as pack-oxen; the rest he would pay any one I would appoint to receive them when he returned from the hunting veldt in the autumn. "I am sure, Sieur," he continued, "you will do that, as you know that when I promise anything it is as good as done."

"Yes, Jan, I know your promises to pay are good; but I prefer the oxen. Can't you make me any other proposition? You might borrow some cattle of your relations here, and owe *them* instead of *me*. If they will not give you credit, how can you expect *me* to?"

This staggered him for a half-minute; but he was equal to the difficulty, and replied that the cattle his relations had were their *all*. If I took them away they would not be able to plough this year.

"That won't make much difference, Jan; for the small piece you plough the lot of you could dig in two days." So I cut the matter short by telling him that if he did not pay me he could not have the gun, and that we should leave in an hour; and left him talking very confidentially to his *swaar*. I knew he would make another desperate effort, for a gun with these people ranks before a wife; and while we were inspanning he came and offered me, besides the two oxen, a yearling and his note for fifteen pounds. The latter he said he had arranged with Kert to take from me as part of his pay.

As Kert said he was willing to accept Jan's note, we drove right away, and that night outspanned at a large pan of water. The cries of the water-fowl kept us awake half the night, so next morning we paid them out for it by shooting fifteen teal, two flamingoes,

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and nine avocets, which were very acceptable, as our *menu* had not included fowl for some time.

That night we arrived at K'Abiam Pool—a large lake, in some places as much as eighteen feet deep, and with several large islands in it. No one is allowed to remain here more than a week together, and only one werf at a time is permitted, so the country round about wears an unusually bright appearance, with plenty of

K'ABIAM POOL.

grass, and wild fowl in abundance. We remained here four days enjoying the beautiful clear water, and the cattle luxuriating in the grass, sama, and wild cucumbers, which existed in profusion. This being about the last place where we were likely to get sama, we gathered enough to make two bottles of sama-water, with the intention of carrying it home as a sample, but fearful lest it should turn sour.

Shortly after leaving K'Abiam Pool, we crossed a

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wide flat which Kert said was positively the last stretch of sand that we should come to. He was evidently anxious to encourage us to hurry on, for we did not meet a soul who was not in some way or other Kert's creditor, and I was pestered with applications to pay his debts and stop the amount out of the old Bushman's wages! This would hardly have been fair—either to Kert or myself, so when the old man proposed to cut across on foot to Zout Pits—a brackish water-hole in the bed of the river Hyob, down the course of which the so-called "road" lay, I was not unwilling to accede to this suggestion. After emerging from the sand-plain we came to a pan of clayey water, and two days later the whole country was nothing but clay, a large stretch of which is cultivated by a farmer from Bloemfontein, named Steyne, who also keeps a sort of shop where we bought sugar and coffee, &c.,—luxuries that we had been without for some days. Talk about a French *connoisseur* or a London *gourmet* abandoning himself to the enjoyment of a favourite *plat!* They were not in it with us when we actually had a cup of coffee with milk in it!

Passing a pile of stones on a rocky *koppje* which seems to beacon off the boundary of the Koranna country, we found Kert waiting for us, he having got along much quicker on foot than we with all our *impedimenta* jolting along the rough river-bed. Here we parted company again for a while, Kert going on to Upington, with the "little people" and the most of the baggage, while Lulu, "I'll-vatch-it," and I, with Korap and two Bastards, made a détour to visit the Great Falls on the Orange River. Here also Dirk and Klas left us.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Down the banks of the Orange River—A settler from Canada—The waggon overturned—Surgery under difficulties—Engineering the road—Exploring the river-banks—Crossing the rapids—First glimpse of the Falls—A waterfall out of the solid rock—A whirlpool—A beautiful scene—A flowery bower—Pride has a fall—Photographing the rapids—Freaks of Nature—Reconnoitring the Hercules Falls.

FOLLOWING the banks of the river, from which the sand-waves to the north were plainly visible, and passing through Zwart Modder, a place with two stone houses and several werfs, we came to a brick farm-house, the residence of a French Canadian, named De Jay, who had come to this country many years ago, and made his fortune hunting on the Kalahari, where, in one season alone, he cleared over 6000*l.*,—nearly losing his life, however, another time, and having to abandon his waggons and oxen in the sands—and was now the possessor of 40,000 morgen of land, on which he had built two large stone dams and opened out two running springs, and which carried 1540 cattle and 10,000 sheep. Our description of our doings stirred up the old Nimrod in him, and he declared that he would go again as soon as he had delivered a trifle of 600 fat oxen which he had just sold, if only Dr. N—— would go with him. Dr. N—— was a trader, who, through the treachery of the Hottentots in Namaqualand, had lost everything he had, and now was keeping a school, having the

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children of three or four families from some miles round. When we told them that we were going to the falls in order to photograph them, they said we should be satisfied if we so much as caught a glimpse of them. De Jay had not only failed to get close to them himself, but knew half a dozen others who had been no more successful. The most that could be seen in wet seasons was the mist, and at low water, during the dry weather, when the river divides into several channels, four or five streams had to be swum before any one could get near enough to see anything but a series of yawning chasms, rugged rocks, rushing rapids, and steep cliffs. But all this only whetted our curiosity and made us the more eager to carry out our plan. The greater the difficulty the greater the κυδος; so with the good wishes of the worthy pair, accompanied by some mutton and bread and butter, we left early one morning, with full and particular instructions as to the easiest route. As we descended, the banks of the river became more rugged and the scenery grander; a good stream flowing between lofty banks broken by frequent ravines, which led away from the river on the one hand to the sandy plain on the other. Presently we came to a party of Hottentots, camped in a beautiful valley, hemmed in by a wall of precipitous brown rocks, where water and grass were abundant, and their cattle looked as sleek as moles.

They offered to sell us a boy and a rather comely girl, who with her vermicelli complexion, high cheek-bones, and almond eyes, reminded me of a Chinese—indeed all the Hottentots have a more or less decidedly Celestial expression of countenance. We declined their offer, but purchased instead some meat and milk, in exchange for tobacco and coffee.

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We camped that night in a lovely spot, beneath a high cliff, and near some camel-trees, whose wide-spreading branches were alive with various coloured singing birds. In the middle distance was a green hill backed up by a high round-topped mountain in the distance. That night, after dinner, we were enjoying the peaceful serenity of the scene, qualified by a quiet game of cards, when the oxen, which had been listlessly chewing the cud all alone, stamped with a roar. Before we could jump out of the waggon the leaders were around to the fore-wheel, dragging the yokes and chains, to which they were tied, after them; then snap went some of the *reims*, and away went three or four oxen into liberty, while the others, trying to follow suit, cut their career short by pulling the waggon over on top of them. It took some time to set things to rights again. The greatest trouble was to get the waggon up; this we did at last by fixing a pair of ropes to the under wheels, passing them over the waggon, and then attaching a span of oxen to them, by which means they "rolled" it back again. To prevent their pulling it over on the opposite side, Lulu stood with hatchet in hand, ready to cut the rope as soon as the waggon passed the balance. It was useless to attempt to follow the runaways in the darkness, and all through the night we could hear them bellowing, in alternate tones of dismay and defiance, "We are lost; where are you?" and "We are free; you come too!" while the prisoners replied with a monotonous roar of "No more; we're sore!"

In the scurry poor "I'll-vatch-it" stepped on a plant of the *Euphorbia candelabra*, driving the fine, sharp, black thorns, about three-quarters of an inch long, into the soles of his feet, right through the thick,

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tough skin, into the quick. He was in terrible agony, both with pain and with fear, for these prickles are often poisonous, and inflict serious injury. Taking a pair of pincers I soon pulled all the thorns out excepting one in the hollow of the foot, that the pincers would not catch. Lulu was obliged to hold him while I cut away the flesh sufficiently to get at it, when it came out like pulling a French nail. To make sure of destroying any poisonous effects I poured some dilute sulphuric acid into the places, which made the poor fellow yell. Fortunately for him there was none of the poison on the thorns, and in a few days he was all right again.

Next day we recovered the missing cattle, and were soon creeping along the dry bed of one of the side-streams of the river, between high cliffs which narrowed in the distance, threatening to bar our passage. That afternoon we came to a "port," a narrow cleft not more than ten feet wide in places, whose steep sides reached upwards nearly one thousand feet.

"If a huge boulder should become displaced now," said Lulu, "while we are going through this pass, we should not have much chance. It would drive us into the earth."

"Yes," I replied, "we should be safely buried with a mighty tombstone to mark the spot. But that old vulture high up above the cliffs there would make an effort to resurrectionize us."

Suddenly the oxen stopped and the Bushman that was leading called out, "There is no more road." Running forward I found our passage barred by a huge fallen rock. We were in a fix; to turn round we must take the waggon to pieces first, for there was not space enough on either side for an ox to pass. On

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examining the rock, however, we found it split into three pieces, and, after testing the depth of the sand under it, we made up our minds to sink the rock; so, taking turns with the shovels, we soon had it low enough for the oxen to climb over.

Passing through this port we came out into the wildest scenery we had as yet beheld, putting me in mind of Switzerland at the back of Vevey. Picking our way around numbers of immense rocks that had fallen from the nearly perpendicular cliffs, we reached at last what seemed a *cul-de-sac*, and then suddenly turning a sharp corner we came in sight of a Hottentot tending a large flock of sheep, who informed us that two miles further on we should find a werf and some men digging a well—which we did. One of the diggers was an Englishman named Harper; the other an Afrikander, his brother-in-law. They were in very good humour, having just struck a vein of water that ran faster than they could dip it out, and insisted on our staying to breakfast. Their fresh eggs were a treat, as was also the goats' milk. We furnished them with bread, which was as great a treat to them.

In answer to our inquiries about the Falls, they said that now the water was low we could, by wading and swimming, get to the top of the fall, close to where it fell into the abyss; but that we should never be able to get below. Only one man that they knew—a Hottentot—had ever succeeded in doing so, and he had never come back again.

After photographing this picturesque place, and getting the direction from our hosts, we plodded on again, coming about midday to a wattle-and-daub house, belonging to a man named Coe Smith, near one of the river branches. Here were a kraal for oxen

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at night, a cooking skerm, and abundance of grass close by; everything we required at our hand; so we determined to make this our headquarters while we explored the place.

We found dry willow-poles sufficient to make a raft to carry the camera and other necessaries. By utilizing the ox-reims and all our spare ropes, we made one length sufficient to reach the bottom of any place not deeper than four hundred feet. While Lulu was getting his camera, &c., in order, "I'll-vatch-it" and I, armed with a jumping-pole and a short length of Manilla rope each, started to find the fall. After crossing one stream by wading and jumping, we found ourselves on an island covered with trees and flowering shrubs, most of them armed with thorns, and in places so thick that it was almost an impossibility to get through them, and we frequently had to turn back and try another place.

Guided by the roar of the falling water, now creeping on our hands and knees to avoid the thorny bushes, now slipping over patches of wet mud, or jumping over or wading through pools of water, now climbing over rough rocks and smooth boulders, we presently came to the other side of the island, past which ran a rushing torrent, white with anger, foaming with rage, as it found its course impeded by multitudes of cold grey rocks, whose stern immobility contrasted strongly with the tempest of passion in which the waters rushed past. We sought for a likely-looking place to cross this "rapid;" and bruised our shins and tore our clothes as we jumped from one projecting rock to another, only to find ourselves confronted when half-way across by an intervening space too wide to leap, too deep to wade, and too swift to swim. Then, in

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another direction, we would come to a broad patch of reed-covered mud, too soft and slippery to give a foothold, and so, thwarted at every turn, we crossed and recrossed the different channels several times, with the result of finding ourselves apparently worse instead of better off every time. At last, however, we came to a place where, to judge by the ripple—for the water was too thick to see a rock four inches beneath the surface—there was a practicable shallow, and, turning up our pants, we carefully felt our way across. The bottom was a flat rock, covered with a thin layer of greasy mud, obliging us to "walk circumspectly" for fear of slipping: we had nearly succeeded in getting across when I heard a splash behind me, and looking round found that "I'll-vatch-it" had lost his foothold and disappeared into a deep hole. In a moment, however, he came up to the surface, blowing like a porpoise, but out of danger.

"What's the matter?" I laughingly shouted; "taking a bath!"

"Die madder is plendy," he replied; "my foot is by dat rock slip, und die vasser opens himselfs and tooks me in."

"Never mind; now you are wet you can try the depth of this sleepy pool in front. Be careful, or you will fall again; that slimy clay deposit is as slippery as soft soap."

"Yah, I don't vant some peebles to dell me about dat; die clay vas so slip as never vas. You must dake your clothes oud, und make swim."

There was no help for it. "I'll-vatch-it" could just bottom the pool, so I undressed: by holding my clothes in a bundle above my head I managed to keep them dry, while we passed a succession of pools

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and rapids. Our progress was much quicker now, as we could keep a fairly straight course; the rapids in some places were steep and strong, but were here too deep to wade through, and the only difficulty we encountered was in barking our shins against the hidden jagged rocks. At last we reached the edge of the water, and standing behind a mighty rock, whose steep sides trembled with the jarring of the water, I dressed myself, preparatory to climbing a jumble of angular granite rocks, with here and there a deep chasm, or a *cul-de-sac*, which equally barred our further progress. At every step the roar as of rushing mighty waters grew louder and louder, till at last we had to shout in order to make one another hear; we were clearly approaching the Falls, and suddenly we came in sight of a cloud of mist, rising like a white fog, or rather like a bank of powdered snow. Between us and the chasm down which the cataract plunged was a deep bed, whose precipitous sides—as smooth as polished marble—enclosed a large pool of water. The only possible way of getting at the Fall seemed to lie across this basin, which at high water would no doubt be full to overflowing, and add its quota to the general din, but which was now lying quiescent and placidly reflecting the rays of the burning sun. A troop of baboons scampered away down the rocks on our approach, and, following their example, I determined to risk clambering down the face of the grey granite walls, depending upon the crevices and projecting corners to give me hand and foothold. The last bit was an incline of about forty-five degrees, without a crack or crevice or the slightest inequality. There was only one way to get down, and that was to slide. Sprawling myself out spread-eagle fashion on my back, feet first

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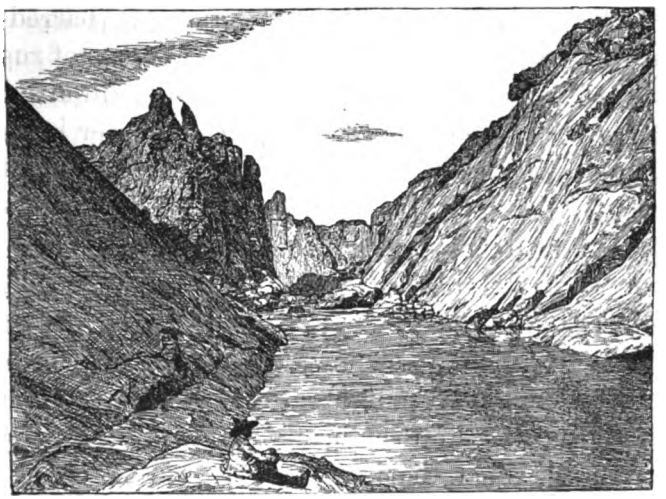
and my head raised far enough to see in front of me, I arrived in three or four seconds at the bottom, minus part of my unmentionables, but otherwise in comfort.

Running round the pool I saw in front of me a long deep gorge, which I christened "Rock Drift," at the end of which, about half a mile away, I caught a glimpse of a great waterfall half encircled by the halo of a beautiful double rainbow. Only a part of the cataract was



ROCK DRIFT.

visible, the rest being hidden behind the projecting cliffs or veiled behind the mist.

Looking up to beckon "I'll-vatch-it" to come, I saw him standing on a ledge about a hundred feet above, and gesticulating earnestly to me; so I clambered up again as hastily as possible.

"Wunderschön!" exclaimed my Teutonic companion, as I joined him on a table rock overhanging the dark writhing river some four hundred feet below.

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Just a glimpse of the great fall could be seen in the distance, wreathed in spray; but between us and it ran a long deep gorge, with the river flowing at the bottom, fed by innumerable cascades of water tumbling into it from all sides. Immediately beneath us rose a cloud of mist, although there was no waterfall within some distance; so lying flat on the rock, and getting "I'll-vatch-it" to hold my feet down, I pushed my body as far as possible forward, and craning my neck over the edge of the precipice saw, some thirty feet below, a huge jet of water, about the size of a main street sewer, and quite as round, rushing out of the face of the solid rock on which we stood, tumbling through the air some three hundred feet sheer, and breaking itself into myriads of snowy white particles before it lost itself in the dark surging waters beneath. It was evidently a subterranean outlet to the waters of some of the rapids we had crossed; but the sun was getting low, and we could not trace its source just now. If we did not get back at once we might be benighted, and forced to spend the hours of darkness on the brink of this seething abyss.

Being satisfied that we had crossed some of the streams more than once, we tried to avoid doing so again, by following the edge of the precipice down the river as far as we could—a difficult task, as we kept continually coming suddenly to a standstill on the edge of a lateral gorge, too wide to jump over and too steep to climb down or up. In tracing these gorges up to their starting-point, we found they invariably originated near the edge of the flowing streams, which in the rainy season would overflow into them, each of them thus forming another waterfall, all tumbling into the main gorge below the great fall.

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After climbing, slipping, sliding, jumping, and wading for nearly two hours, we struck off into a mass of great square and angular rocks, that looked as if two or three pyramids had been shot there, and completely barred our progress. So we took to the water again, and soon after came to a whirlpool, down which the stream disappeared bodily. This no doubt was the origin of the curious subterranean discharge already referred to, and we had to be very careful to prevent being sucked in by the maelström. Our way after this lay through open glades, carpeted with dark-green grass, relieved here and there with rich pink lily-like flowers, which bowed their beautiful heads gracefully to the soft breeze, as if welcoming us to their peaceful bowers; the pendent branches of the weeping willows lent an air of sadness to the scene, and served as a foil to the sterner forms of the stately camel-trees, round whose mighty trunks clung like a foster-child in close embrace the twining arms of a climbing plant, beautifully decked in rich scarlet fruit that looked like rubies in the sunlight, but whose clasp would eventually prove fatal to the sturdiest monarch of the glen. From here we passed through a deep gully, with steep clay sides, sheltered beneath the deep shadows of overhanging trees and plants whose flowers filled the air with perfume, and emerged at the margin of a wide pool, mirroring its rich border of vegetation, whose shadows gave it a mysterious depth. Skirting the brink of this pool, we came to an open space of bare red sandstone rock, with here and there a patch of soil supporting the most beautiful flowering shrubs it had yet been my fortune to behold, completely studded with thousands of deep red flowers shaped like a folding Japanese

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lantern, but incurved at the top, and hundreds of fruit-pods that resembled blossoms, ranging from light pink up to scarlet. On all sides spread the spindly light-blue leafless stem and branches of the milk-bush, always emitting a peculiar balsamic perfume, and exuding, when broken, large drops of a sticky milky substance.

Beyond this was a little meadow, bordered with numberless flowering shrubs, whose dark-green leaves contrasted beautifully with the mass of sweet-scented white flowers, and with a perfume resembling that of stephanotis. So far, we had succeeded in making our way without crossing any of the side-streams, but after passing a piece of rough ground, with deep, interwoven gullies, every few yards with wet and slippery banks, along which it was most fatiguing to walk, we came to the stream that separated us from our waggon. We could hear Jan cracking the whip as a signal, and the dogs barking quite distinctly. While searching for a fordable spot the short twilight began to wane, and we had hurriedly to make up our minds to cross. The rocks on either side were flat, leading us to hope we might wade across without much difficulty; but we stripped, for fear of accident, and, holding our bundles aloft, were soon halfway across. "I'll-vatch-it" led the way: the water was only knee-deep, and the bottom quite smooth, and my companion was congratulating us on our good fortune, saying, "Ah! ven you sall have places to cross vat gut is, den I take you—" when the proverb about Pride having a fall was aptly illustrated by his sudden disappearance, for the second time that day, into a deep hole. As he struck out to swim, his bundle of clothes floated gaily down the stream, and I had to

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go to the rescue, fortunately keeping my own garments dry, but not without grazing what little skin still remained on my shins, against a submerged rock.

On reaching the shore we pulled on our clothes as quickly as possible, during which operation I complimented "I'll-vatch-it" on his skill as a guide.

"Yes, you certainly succeeded in finding a beautiful ford, somewhat damp, perhaps, as most fords are; but still not unfathomable. I shall always send you forward after this, since you succeed so well, and 'vatch it' so carefully."

"Dat's all right," replied the imperturbable Teuton. "Nodding successes so much as succeeds."

Crawling through the trees that lined the bank, we came out into an almost treeless plain of rock and sand, and guided by the sounds from the waggon, reached camp in half an hour, tired, wet, and hungry. Lulu spoiled our supper by informing us that the chronometer was smashed by the overturning of the waggon, as well as some of his "plates," but fortunately, he thought the "exposures" were all right, though of course we should have to live on that hope till we got to England again, for they could not be examined until they had been "developed." How we should curse the mad freak of those oxen if they had annihilated all the results of Lulu's skill and labour—his only solace amid all the hardships he had undergone! But "what is the use of repining?" We could only put our trust in Providence and keep our plates safe for the future. So we set to work to take the precaution of wrapping up all the shields and plate-holders—particularly those that we were to carry with us on the morrow—in blankets, so as to save them from jarring in case of mishap. The

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next morning broke brilliantly, and while an early breakfast was cooking I explored the river higher up, and found a place where we could easily cross dry-footed by jumping from rock to rock. An hour after breakfast we were safely on the other side, "I'll-vatch-it" carrying the ropes, and Lulu the camera, while the shields full of plates were entrusted to me.

Profiting by our experience of the previous day we reached the "spout" waterfall without much difficulty, and then followed the bank of the gorge till we came to the top of the chasm, into which the great fall precipitates itself. On the way we took were two more streams, and an infinity of deep gorges, some so narrow that we could jump across, others so wide that we had to climb down and up again; this required all our skill and strength, as the steps made by Dame Nature were so irregular and indistinct that in many cases they could not be traced. At last, after three hours of such toiling, we reached a standpoint some 130 feet above where the largest fall precipitated itself into the deep, dark, hole below. We could not see the waters take the actual plunge, but watched them as they tore along the rapids above, the waves struggling to surmount or avoid the impediments placed in their way by the huge angular rocks that strewed the channel, and elbowing each other in their nervous excitement to see which should be first to take the awful leap. From this point the great "spout" was plainly visible in "full working order," and Lulu, after whom we named this freak of nature the "Lulu Fall," took a photo of it, with the banks of the river stretching away on either side, the perspective closed in by a pile of rocks resembling a group

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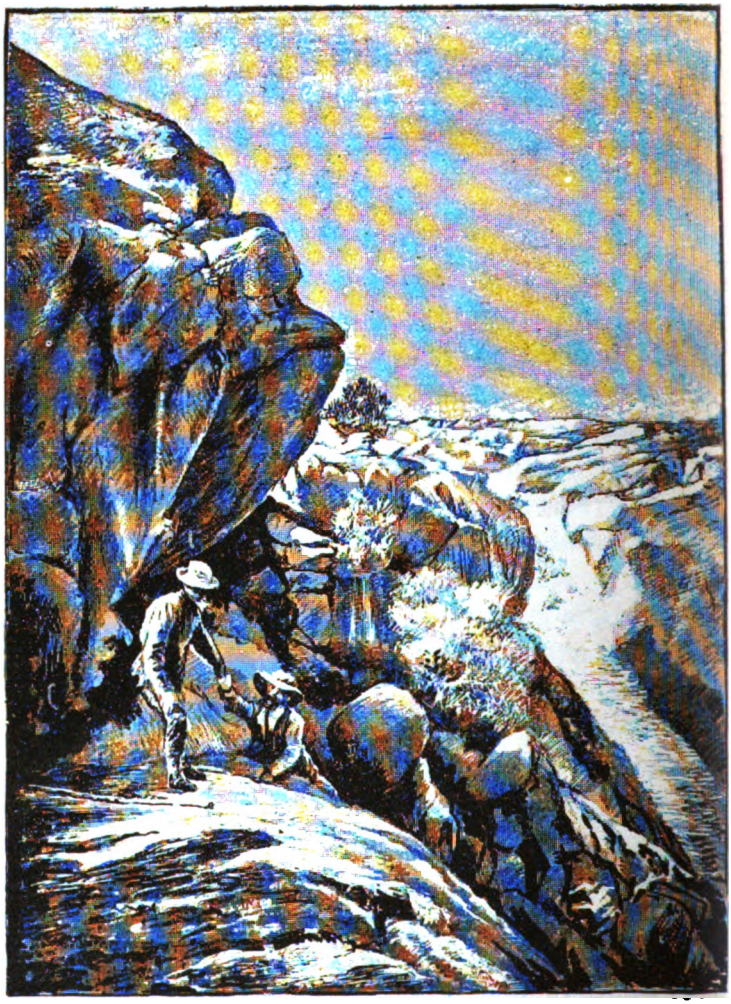

GORILLA ROCK.

Page 397.

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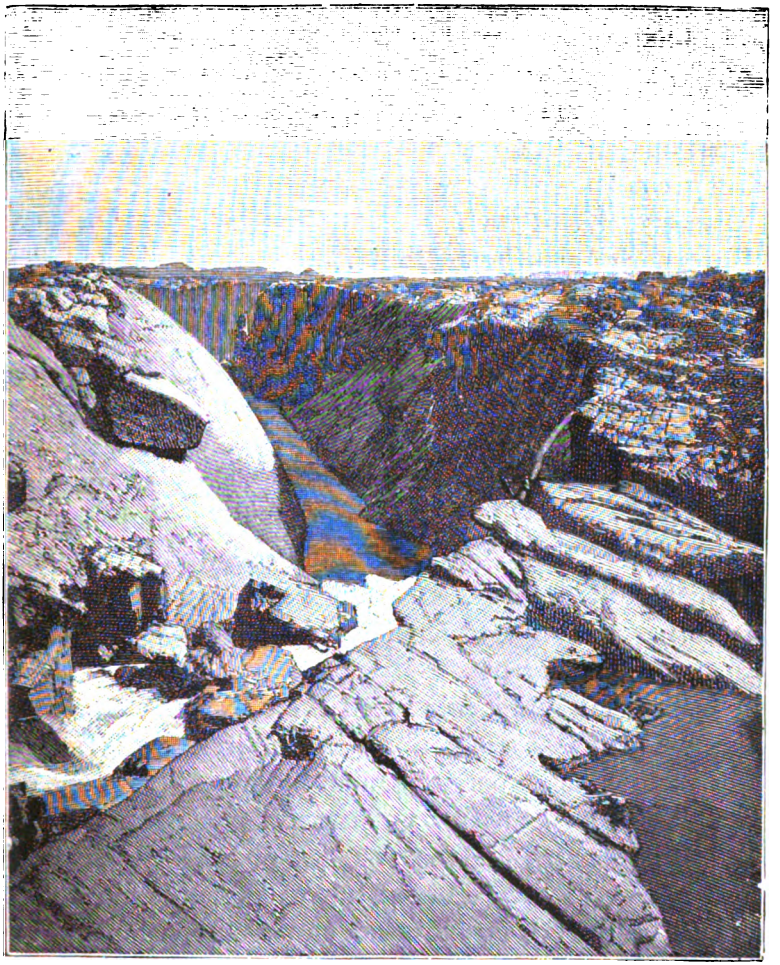
of ancient towers. Several other views of the rapids were taken, showing the various streams and gorges—all of which would be living torrents in the wet season—



LULU FALLS AND CHASM.

and the curious disposition of the rocky surface of the ground surrounding the rapids. Some of the rocks assumed the most grotesque shapes. There was one

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great mass which bore the closest resemblance to a gorilla, and which we consequently christened "Gorilla Rock;" while another, from its similitude to a book, we named the "Book Rock." These views, as seen on the ground-glass of the camera, made most charming and characteristic pictures, and ought to give us a fine collection of photographs. But what we were most anxious to do was to get a view in full face of the great fall—which we named the "Hercules Falls," as suggestive of its size as well as in honour of the Governor of the Cape Colony. It took us all our time to find a practicable way down the steep sides of the precipice. In some places we had to "hang on by our eyebrows"—so that, although we could feel the earth tremble beneath the concussion of the falling mass of water, and get saturated with the spray, we had no opportunity of getting a fair view of the cataract; and, as the "shades of night" would soon be "falling fast," we had to abandon the attempt to get a picture that day, and contented ourselves with selecting a likely spot from which to photograph the place on the morrow.

Lulu made up his mind that the only best place was from a point of rock about a hundred yards sheer down an almost perpendicular precipice, the face of which was as smooth as glass, without a crevice or crack or cranny for foot or finger hold. The only way to get down was by means of ropes, but the pieces we had were not long enough, so we spent the evening in joining together all the koodoo-hide ox-straps, and testing their strength.

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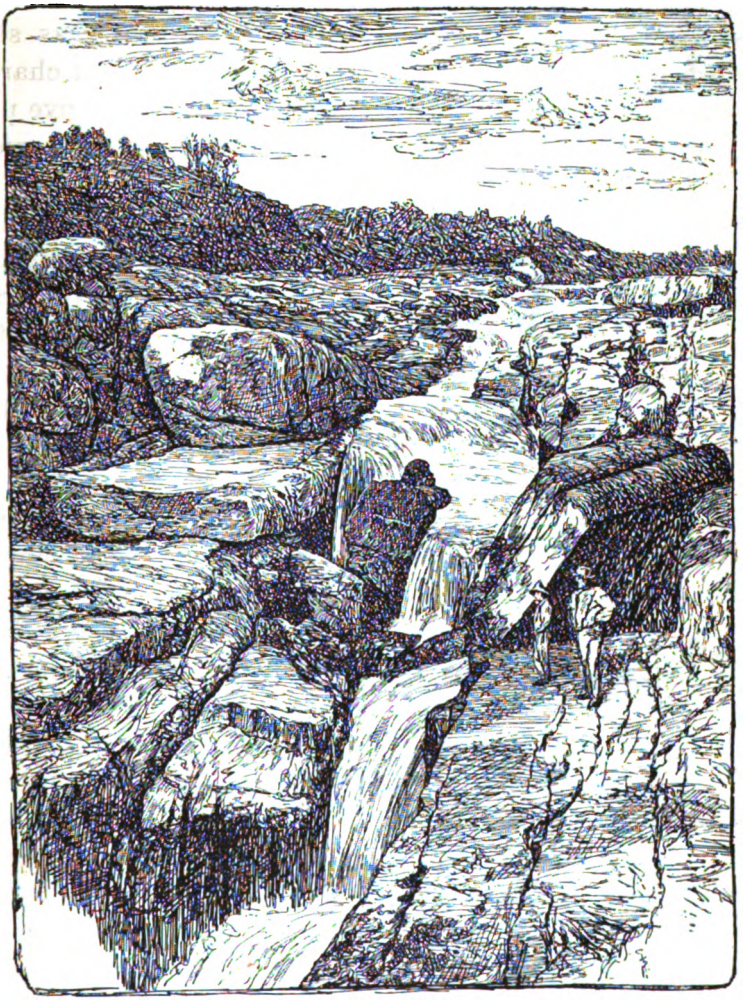

THE BOOK ROCK AND FALLS.

Page 398.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

An acrobatic enterprise—Photographing the Hercules Falls—A sudden rise in the river—We make a raft—Pheasants, guinea-fowl, and rock-pigeons—Discretion the better part of valour—Descending the precipice—Farini Towers and Falls—A magnificent sight—A narrow escape—Mudlarks—A well-earned supper—An underground stream—The Diamond Falls—Surprised by the flood—"The Hundred Falls."

Next morning, just as bright Aurora was raising her head from her rosy pillow on the Eastern horizon, we were once more on our way to the selected site for our open-air studio. Making one end of the rope fast round a rock, and stuffing our coats underneath where it turned the sharp corner, I started first: taking the rope in my hands and twisting my leg around it, I slipped easily enough down till I came to the straps: the rope, I knew, was strong enough, but I had my doubts about some of the straps. However, they bore the strain and took me safely to within ten feet of the bottom. From the top it had seemed as if they were only a few inches too short, but now I found a gap of ten feet at least between me and the rocks. I hesitated whether to drop off or climb back, when a happy thought struck me: I would write a note and tie it to the end of the strap before dropping off, and explain to Lulu the state of affairs, so that he could fasten the camera to the end of the rope and lower it down instead of sliding it down as arranged. In half-an-hour came the camera, which I just managed to

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reach standing on tiptoe, then the shields, protected by their covering of blankets, &c., and lastly, Lulu himself. He was delighted with the point of view, which he said would give both elevation and depth, foreground and middle distance, while the sun was just right for the shadows and high lights. The only drawback was that we were so far away from the beautiful object, the fall itself; but that could not be helped: there was no other place to stand the camera, and we were lucky to find even this.

"There are not many photographers who are gymnasts as well," said Lulu, "and one need be both to get a picture of the fall from this point."

The focus was soon adjusted and two views taken, and then Fritz hauled up the apparatus, and we followed: putting our feet against the face of the rock, and stretching out our legs at right angles to it, we ran up, hand over hand, quicker than we had come down, for we were now sure of the rope's strength. Reaching the summit, I found that all the tan had been suddenly taken off Fritz's face.

"What's the matter, Fritz: are you ill?"

"I don't know aboud dat ill, bud I vas preddy sick: I vas perspire just like die vatter, und dem cold chill creep my back up. If I don't got to I never play too much mit dead."

"That's where the fun is. But you need not be afraid on our account. It's easy enough to us. You're like the rest of the world, what you cannot do yourself, and don't understand, you think wonderful. Come along, we must explore the chasm as far down as we can see; I'm anxious to find out what causes those tower-like rocks to stand out so boldly at the end of the gorge."

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Our way lay over, under, or around, huge rocks, and through deep gullies. A narrow chasm would now and then yawn at our feet, completely barring our progress, and forcing us to exercise our jumping powers to the full. After about two hours of this work we found ourselves on the point of a narrow strip of precipitous rock, not more than eighteen feet wide. To our right, some 400 feet below, ran the river: to the left, at about half that depth, were masses of broken rocks, with pools of water between, altogether as rough and wild a place as we had yet seen. The sun had already traversed three parts of its half-circle, and was casting deep shadows on the rocky sides of the cañon, so we deferred any further exploration till next day. Concealing the camera and ropes behind an old brown rock that had withstood the storms and burning sun for ages, we struck out a new route to the waggons, at each turn finding some fresh beauties in the floral decorations and rock-work. But when we reached the outermost stream, which we had crossed in the morning, we were surprised to find that the river had risen considerably; not a stone was to be seen all the way across, and we had great difficulty in getting over, knocking elbows, knees, and toes against sharp-edged rocks.

Fritz said it would all subside again before morning, as the floods were not of much account at this time of year; but next day the water was still so high that we were forced to build a raft of dry willow logs and poles, which we laid six in a row and four deep, and fastened together with raw ox-hide.

The raft, however, was too narrow to be safe for carrying three of us, though buoyant enough for our clothes, &c. I tried, first of all, to see if it would

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carry me, but the slightest movement to one side while poling it along upset it, and I found myself up to my waist in the muddy water. So we abandoned the idea of crossing on it ourselves, and only used it to keep our clothes dry while we swam. The water seemed to me to be still rising; driftwood was floating down with it, and submerged rocks added to the dangers of the swift current, so, as Lulu and Fritz were indifferent swimmers, I swam across first, with a small rope attached to the raft, and then hauled it across after me, while the two others, taking hold of the raft, were drawn over with but little risk or effort. This was soon done, and in a few moments we all three stood dressing on the opposite bank, our teeth chattering, and shivering with cold; the water was very chilly, and the early morning air, stirred with a light breeze, was still keener.

A sharp walk soon warmed us up. As the pheasants were very plentiful, and the early morning was their feeding-time, we had taken the precaution to bring the shot-gun; and we had not gone far before a couple ran across an open space to cover—which they never reached. These South African pheasants are about the colour and size of the female of the silver pheasant, but much heavier; their cry is very much similar to that of the guinea-fowl,—which is also very plentiful, but is so shy and cunning that it is very seldom that you can see one, although you can hear their cry of "Come back! come back!" on all sides. A pointer or setter would be necessary to make a good bag of them. The Bastards shoot them by finding their roosting-tree, to which they invariably come every night, and slaughter them as they go to bed.

Large flocks of rock-pigeons—about the size of the

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English wood-pigeon, and much the same in colour, save that their wings are beautifully mottled with white dots—were all about the rocks and cliffs, or flying out on the veldt to feed. When we came to the head of the gorge, where we were about to descend, there were hundreds of them sitting about on the high rocks waiting for their companions to join them, and all go to breakfast together. Some of them, however, made a breakfast for us instead, and others that fell down into the crevices of the rocks out of our reach would be found by the pretty small otters that inhabit this wild place, where they had been undisturbed for centuries, until we came and frightened them with the report of our guns. At every discharge, the noise of which was multiplied a thousand times, as it echoed from cliff to cliff, hundreds of the feathered inhabitants flew out of the recesses and fairly filled the narrow space between the nearly perpendicular walls of the deep wild gorge.

Our German companion did not conceal his delight at every addition to our bag, and volunteered to gather wood and make a fire to cook them for dinner. "I'll-vatch-it dat dey vill be cooked vell," he said—much as he had said before, "I'll-vatch-it dat anyveares you sall go I vill go mit you;" but it was easy to see that, although he had talked a great deal about his being able to climb about wherever we went, he was not unwilling to find an excuse for keeping as much as possible out of danger; and when he saw how difficult it would be to get down to the bottom of the cañon, he decided that it would be safer and easier for him to act the cook rather than the gymnast.

Nearly at the outset we had to use the ropes to descend into a deep hole that was still muddy from the

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summer's high water. A half-inch rope was rather small to climb easily; to go down was easy enough, but we had to think of coming back, to facilitate which we tied knots in it. After getting safely down, we shouldered our camera, &c., and crossed a veritable slough of despond, up to our knees in the stickiest, slipperiest, nastiest clay mud that would not even be scraped off, so we had to put our shoes on over it, the mud taking the place of socks. Then came a huge jumble of great jagged rocks—some of them as large as a two-story house—that had slipped off and fallen here from the cliffs above; climbing over some, crawling on our hands and knees under others, or squeezing between some of them where there was only just room for us to pass, we every now and then disturbed in the deep shadows large heavy-winged owls, who would alight on a pointed rock and stare at us through their big eyes with wonder, for we were a greater curiosity to them than they were to us. Then we came to a succession of places nearly perpendicular, and as smooth as glass, worn so by the water with which this deep gorge was evidently filled in the rainy season Four times we had to let ourselves down by means of ropes; the most difficult thing to do was to find places to securely fasten them. This we did once or twice by jamming a log of dry driftwood into a crevice which seemed to have been formed for the purpose. Lulu would say, "Go on; I'll follow. You are sure to find what you require, either an easy place to climb, or something handy to fasten your rope to."

At last, after four hours' hard labour, we reached the end of the gorge, and could see the main river flowing about forty yards below our feet. There stood a number of grand granite towers, seeming to

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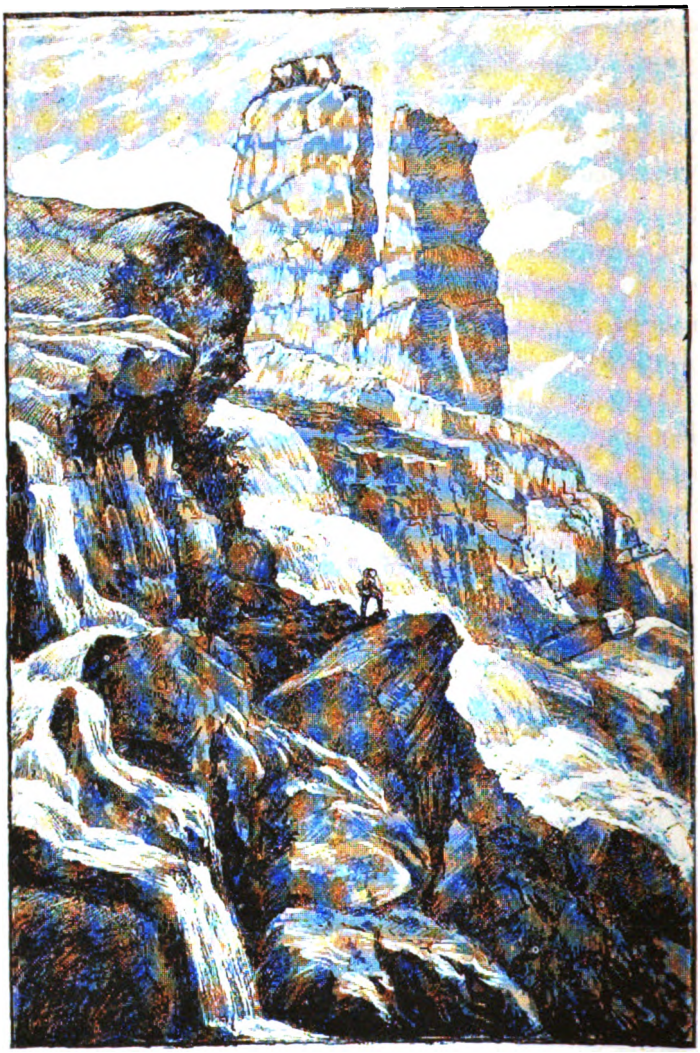

FARINI FALLS AND TOWERS.

Page 405.

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reach to the sky, standing like giant sentinels keeping watch and guard over this wilderness of rocks, and pointing the way to the multitudinous streams that plunged from all directions into the deep dark chasm.

Turning a sharp corner, we came suddenly to a beautiful waterfall bursting out beneath a rectangular arch, formed by two gigantic rocks that had fallen against each other, and out of the crevices of which grew dark-green trees and shrubs, in beautiful contrast with the grey and brown rocks and the snow-white water, as it danced from shelf to shelf.

Lulu was delighted with the grandeur and novelty of the scene, and hastened from point to point to select the best place from which to get a picture. He was some time deciding, for, although there seemed an *embarras de richesses*, he had the true artistic instinct that refused to take a group that was not properly balanced and artistically composed.

When he was ready, he pointed to a rock jutting out close to the waterfall, saying, "If you could get there, without much risk, it would be the making of the picture, and give comparative height." The task was difficult, owing to the rocks being slippery from the spray, but the picture, which Lulu entitled "Farini Falls and Towers," will show that I managed to accomplish it.

While I was returning, a most extraordinary thing happened. A new waterfall suddenly appeared between where Lulu stood and me. At first there was a small cascade, with just water enough to wet the rocks; by the time I had walked past it there was a stream several inches deep, fed by a considerable torrent; and in half an hour a big fall was tumbling into a basin two feet deep and several yards wide. The

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rise of the river above was being felt, and various pools that were previously dried up had run full and overflowed. The question for us was whether it was safe to remain down here any longer. Lulu was bent on taking a picture of the Tower Rocks, and did not heed the rising water.

"Here," he cried, "try and get on that great rock out in the pools, and hand me up the camera. This is the only point high enough to take it all in." And there he was, many feet above me on the other side of a deep chasm which I had to jump in order to get near enough to hand up the apparatus.

From where I stood, the mist-capped towers seemed lost in the sky; the bright sunlight cast their long, dark shadows across the silver spray of the mad torrent and far up the face of the opposite precipice; the deep, dark pools on their left formed a reservoir that fed the beautiful pool we had just photographed, while it in return was filled by a pretty torrent that burst out from beneath a huge block of granite, and leapt gaily through the air, like a shower of sparkling diamonds. In the distance, far up the narrow gorge, the cold high cliff-tops, lighted up by the bright sunlight, looked like polar icebergs in contrast with the dark blackness of the shadowy depths below.

How solemnly grand it was now! How terribly magnificent it would be when all those gorges and crevices and channels were filled to the brim with a rushing mighty torrent, such as must pour thundering through them in the rainy season! But there was no time to indulge in reverie just then, and Lulu's voice calling to me to "Come up and see how grand it looks from this rock!" brought me to my senses.

"No more sight-seeing or photographing to-day,"

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I replied. "If you don't pack up and hurry back, we shall become sleeping partners of these grand old rocks."

"Why," he asked, "what's the matter with you all of a sudden?"

"Don't you see the river is rising? That rock with the water rippling over it was bare when we came here, and the chances are we shall find the road back full of rapids and pools, torrents and waterfalls, if we stay here much longer."

"All right! but I want you just to go and sit on yonder rock, so that I can add your beautiful figure to this picture of the beauties of nature. There are only two or three crevices to jump over, and a pool or two to wade through, and while you are getting there I'll find the focus. I promise not to stay any longer, for I've feasted my eyes pretty well on the scenery here, but find it very light food for the stomach."

While obeying the artist's orders, and climbing to the appointed place, the thought of the feast of Nature's grandeur—combined with visions of a meal that Fritz had no doubt long ago prepared for us—nearly gave me indigestion; but this was no place to give way to dyspepsia, and all our thoughts were now centred on the shortest way back. All went smoothly till we came to the mighty angular rock, forming a sort of archway, beneath which we had walked on our way down, but through which a swift stream of water was now gliding. We tried to get over it, but it was too steep and too slippery; and in our explorations we found that, if only one of us could get to the opposite side, it would be easy to reach the top and let down a rope, and haul up the camera, &c. So I doffed my clothes, and, leaving them with Lulu, took a rope, and half swam, half

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groped my way beneath the archway, through the muddy fluid till I emerged on the other side. The water was very cold, and pulling myself up the bare rocks, I climbed shivering up the steep incline overlooking the spot where Lulu was anxiously awaiting my reappearance. Lowering the end of the rope, I shouted to him to send me up my clothes first, and by the time the apparatus was hauled up, and Lulu had joined me, the warm sun and exercise had chased the chills away.

At every turn new cascades sprang out of the gaunt rocks. One of these I named the "Anna Falls," in honour of the same lady whose name I had taken the liberty of appropriating to another purpose: and Lulu was only too ready to comply with my wish to photograph them, with the result shown in the annexed engraving.

For some distance the jagged rocks and huge boulders,—more or less covered with water where they had been dry in the morning,—lay in the wildest confusion, making our progress very slow, and diminishing the quantity and quality of our clothing, as it increased our anxiety. Our load, too, became heavier the weight of our shoulder-packs gradually increasing as we gathered the ropes we had left hanging at different places on our way down. At last, however, we came in sight of the last, and thinnest, and longest of them all, the chasm down which it was suspended looking even "uglier" to get up than it had seemed when we prepared to descend. But a pool of water lay between us and it, and the question was whether we could wade through. Hastily but carefully entering, without stopping to take off my shoes, I was delighted to find that the water was not deeper than my middle,

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and shouted out the good news to Lulu. At that moment my feet sank deep into the slimy mud and the water wetted the covering to the plates, which were strapped to my back, and I had a narrow escape of spoiling the fruit of all our labours; but fortune continued to smile upon us, and in ten minutes we were both on *terra firma*.

But such figures! The sticky mud stuck to us like

THE ANNA FALLS.

gum; we looked like sewer navvies *minus* the long boot. To climb up the thin rope with such a load of slime was a more difficult task than ever "greasy pole" presented, and we had to set to work to scrape one another.

Lulu went up first, while I held the rope and kept it rigid, making it easier to climb. But to land on top of the rock was not so easy. The rope lay flat on a slightly inclined surface, his weight and mine press-

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ing it so closely that he could not get his fingers under it; but his early gymnastic training came into play. By twisting his leg around the rope he was enabled to support his weight on it, and then, drawing the whole of his body above the top, he threw himself forward, loosened his leg, and accomplished what, to ordinary people, would have been impossible. Having sent up all the *impedimenta*, I followed; but as the lower end of the rope was now free, it would not be so easy for me to turn the corner at the top, so Lulu put his shoe under the rope, close to the edge, so as to make room for my fingers. The rope being very thin, and my hands big, it was a hard struggle for me to get up. As I reached over the edge Lulu grabbed me by the collar, at the same time pulling his shoe out from under the rope, and down went my knuckles against the stone, grinding the bark off them, and squeezing some hard words out of me, which I won't repeat here, for fear my readers might not understand them.

"What did you pull the shoe out for, Lulu?" I asked, when at last I gained the top.

"Because I could not get my foot out from under the rope unless I did," he replied.

He had forgotten to take his foot out of the shoe when he first put it under the rope, and had borne the pain caused by the small cord cutting into it, with my weight on it, until I was safely round the bend.

We were pleased to find our German companion had several rock-pigeons ready grilled. Never was food more welcome; it was now nearly sundown and our last meal was at daylight this morning; the long fasting, combined with the constant and sometimes violent exercise, had created in us ravenous appetites,

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and the rapidity with which we made the half-dozen good-sized sweet morsels disappear would have done credit to Hermann, or any other professor of legerdemain.

That night we slept on our bed of planks without rocking, and never woke until breakfast was announced by Fritz, who shouted,—

"Genklemen, dat coffee vill cold come if you don't stand up, so quicker as quick. Die sun is stand up already. Vere you climbs to-day, dat's vere I bin. I don't vait some more, I'll vatch it."

Old Sol, with his warm, life-giving rays, came steadily and slowly into view, as we completed our toilet. This took us half a minute longer than usual, as we had to put on our shoes! Usually all we had to do was to throw off the blanket and put on our hats. To wrap oneself up in a blanket, and sleep with one's clothes on, saves a great deal of time, especially when an early start is necessary and one's coffee is getting cold, which ours nearly did this time, as we were very tired and sore from yesterday's exertion. Half an hour's walk, however, along the banks of the river, dissipated all our aches, and we were all on the alert, gun in hand, for doves, rock-pigeons, and pheasants. A large hare sprang out from under Lulu's feet and ran between the legs of our Teuton friend, "I'll-vatch-it," who, true to his favourite expression, as quick as thought killed it with a stick.

Our plan was not to cross any of the branches of the river at all, but to follow the right bank of the outermost stream, and trace it to the point where it joined its sister streams at the general gathering of the waters below. So hanging puss up in a thick bush to keep the vultures away from it, and taking

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the feathered game with us for our dinner, we kept steadily on. The walking was smooth compared to what it was on the other side of the stream: now and then a small ravine with a dry watercourse that in wet seasons drained the mountains in the distance, crossed our path at right angles, forming here and there pretty glades and glens, partially clothed in dark-green foliage.

Presently hearing the roar of a rapid, as the water dashed itself against the grey rocks, we hurried forward, thinking we were near the spot where the river made the downward leap; but as yet there was no sign that we had reached the point of junction with the main stream. A little further on, Lulu, who was close to the banks, shouted,—

"There's no more river. It has disappeared."

There was a big pool, dammed up by a ledge of barren rocks, but here the river came to an abrupt end. No bend, no turn, no continuation whatever. After careful search we could not find the marks showing where the water overflowed when the pool became full to the brim during the rainy season, and on going some distance below this ledge we discovered that the water had a subterranean outlet from the pool through a cleft in the rocks, invisible from the upper side. On the lower side, however, hemmed in on all sides by a confused pile of rocks, we found a perfect wall of water, which burst out of a narrow crevice only a foot wide and ten feet high, from which it sprang several feet before spreading into white spray, and tumbling down a steep incline of shelving rocks, making a beautiful cascade, and finally bringing itself to rest in a series of pools encased with perpendicular walls of granite.

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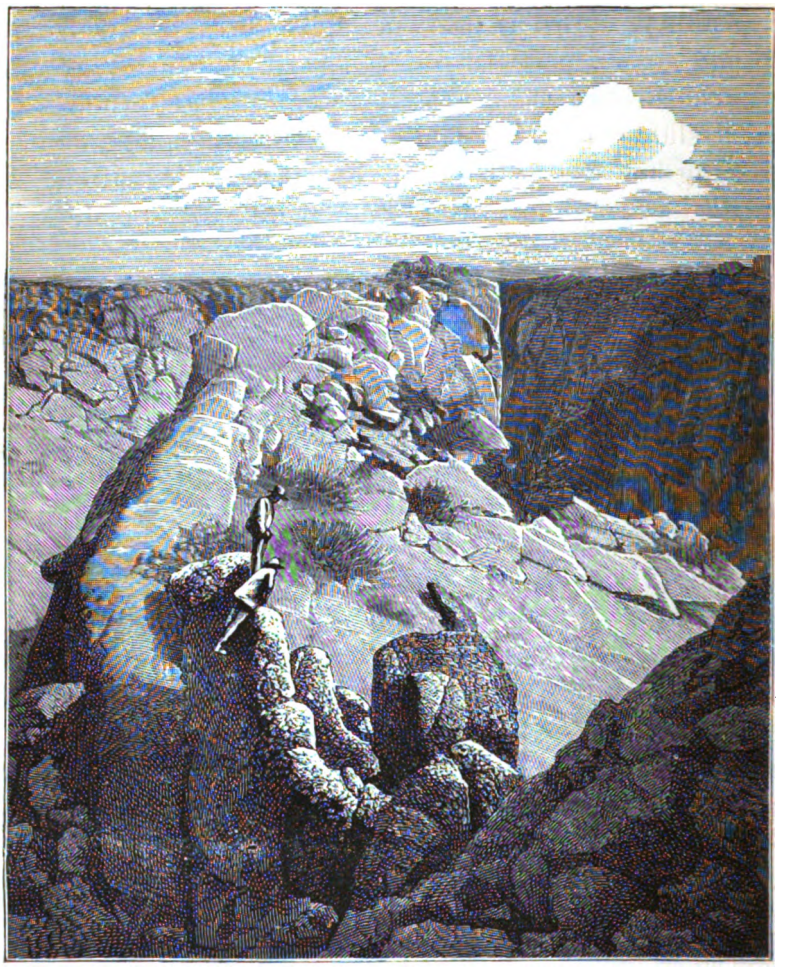

THE SCOTT GORGE AND FALLS.

Page 413.

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In these pools, which ran at right angles to the corner of the stream, the water seemed to have forgotten its struggles, and to be preparing to resume its journey in peace; but in an unsuspected moment it fell headlong down a dark precipice, breaking itself into myriads of particles on the hard, polished rock fifty feet below; then, quickly gathering itself together, it slid over, under, and around huge boulders, as if playing hide-and-seek. This gorge I named after the Resident Commissioner for Korannaland, Mr. John Scott.

To follow its course any farther we had to cross to the opposite side, which we did by taking a flying leap across a deep, narrow channel. Then we descended into the grim, grey, granite gorge, where the bright sun never shone, and whose dark shadows were made more dark by the perpetual mist. The water, after running over another series of projecting rocks, and falling straight down like a mammoth shower-bath into a huge, seething bowl, gathered its strength and fury, as if for a final effort, dashed past its prison walls, made its escape, and with one mad leap sprang over the precipice into the river one hundred feet below.

To get a full-face view of this last cataract, it was necessary to descend the chasm of the main river, a difficult and most dangerous task, which I undertook, and accomplished in one hour, going down the face of the corner formed by the two gorges joining one another nearly at right angles, when the least slip would have pulverised me on the rocks four hundred feet beneath.

Here, in some sand between the rocks, I found half a dozen small diamonds, from which I gave the cataract the name of the Diamond Falls. The accompanying

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picture of this, as well as of the Schermbrücker Falls, are from photos taken by Lulu next day, when we lowered the camera with ropes in much the same way as we had done when the Hercules Falls were photographed. In fact, all the illustrations are taken from photographs with the exception of one, which is from a sketch drawn under the most extraordinary circumstances.

We had spent several days exploring the falls, and finding each day some new gorge communicating with the main river, and had come to the conclusion that each of these, in the rainy season, would be full of water and contribute its quota to the vast flood, when we unexpectedly had practical proof of the correctness of this view, and of the rapidity with which the falls, grand as they are even at low water, assume dimensions that must exceed even the volume of Niagara.

We were down at the bottom of a small gorge, near the Hercules Falls, when we suddenly heard a terrible rumbling, roaring noise.

"What's that?" I said to Fritz, who looked up the rapids and said,—

"Ve never some peebles vill tell, eef ve don't some plendy quicks make—dot rivare is down coming, dat's vat dat noise was. Run!"

After our previous experience we took in the situation in an instant, and fled for our lives to a rock several feet higher than the surrounding ones, whence we watched the oncoming flood, the swollen river sweeping everything before it with a sullen roar. The rocks on which we were standing soon became surrounded by a raging torrent; the wall of water, not taking time to follow the streamlets, burst over the

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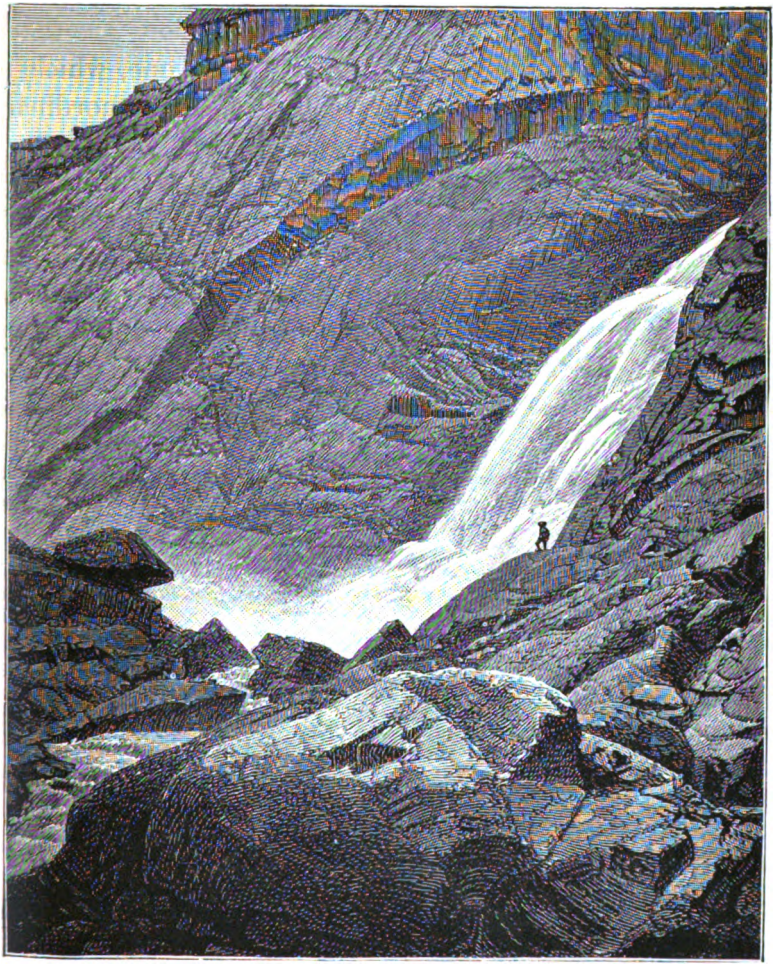

THE DIAMOND FALLS.

Page 414.

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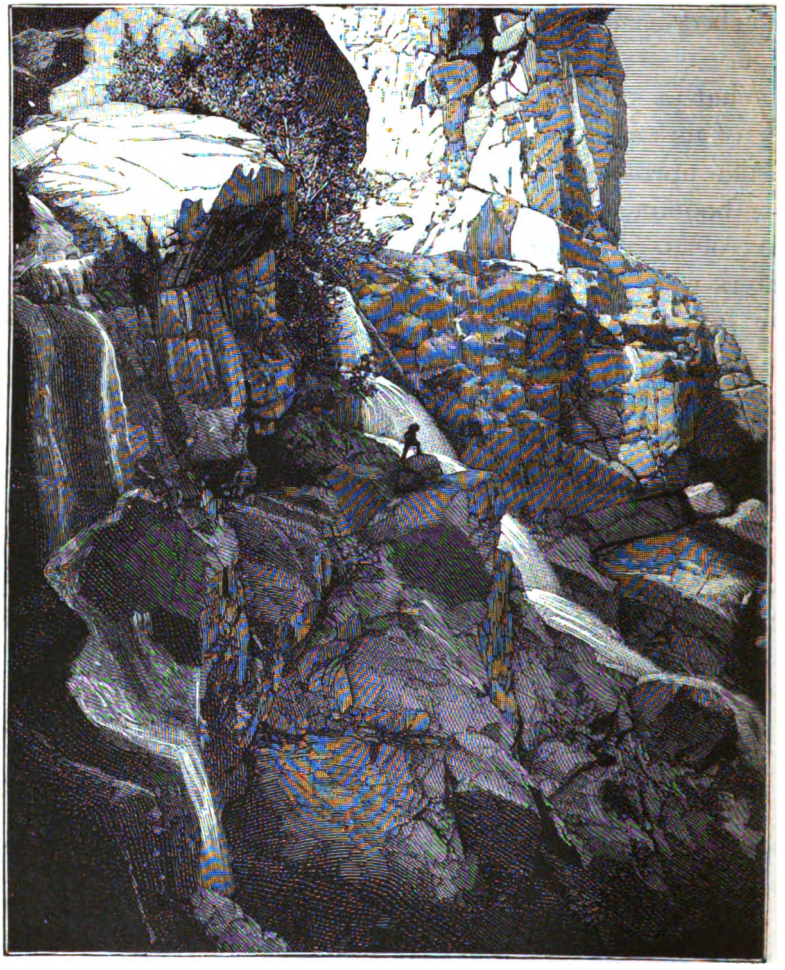

THE SCHERMBRÜCKER FALLS.

Page 415.

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rocks on all sides, and rushing headlong into all the holes, pools, and cracks and crannies, overflowed them in an instant. The main channel was soon filled, and absorbed each little winding stream in the general flood.

What a grand transformation scene! On every side of us was the boiling water, bearing on its surging bosom uprooted trees, logs, poles, and other *débris*. The booming of the drift-wood as it bumped against the rocks, and the roar of the rushing and falling waters were deafening. If the flood rose much more our fate was sealed, for, although the rock we were on was a large one, and appeared to be the dividing line between two channels of the river, it bore unmistakable traces of being waterworn, and no doubt was quite submerged at high water. Our German friend consoled us by saying the flood, at this time of year, would not rise for more than twelve hours, and that the first rush was always the heaviest. This proved to be the case, for, although the level kept slowly creeping up, the rise was not much after the first hour.

"But," "I'll-vatch-it" said, "de vatter vill tree, four days take before it sall be run down vonce more."

This was a pleasant prospect! Three or four days and nights on a bare rock, surrounded by a raging flood.

"How grand the Hercules Falls look now," said Lulu. "If only I had my camera here!"

Grand, indeed, they were; a vast sheet of water was pouring over the precipice on all sides. Not one of the huge boulders could be seen now: great granite blocks that had stood in the middle and sides of the falls were drowned in the flood. What the falls must

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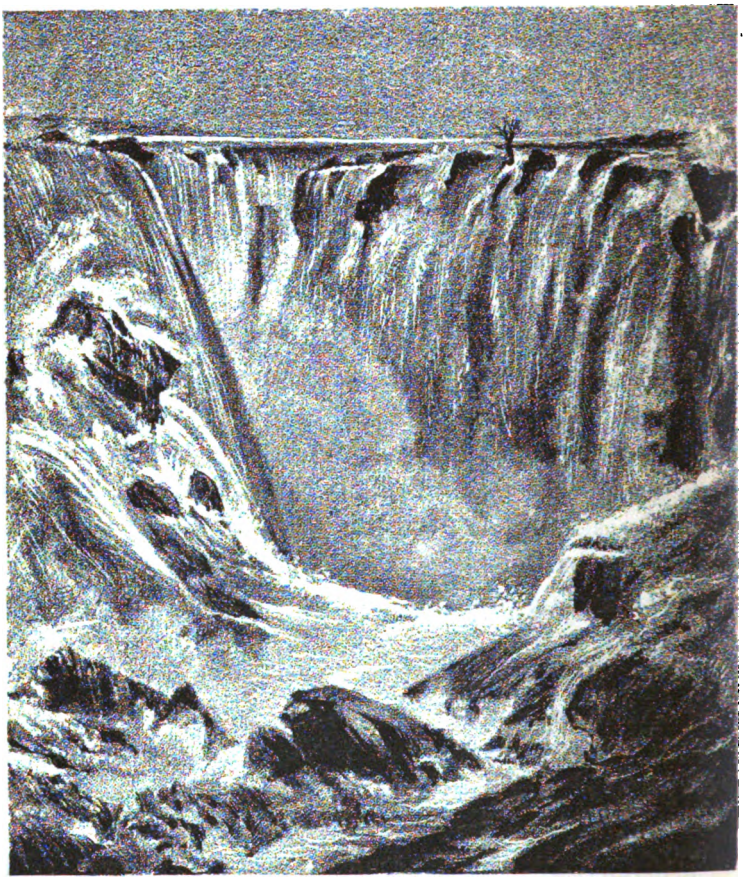
be like at full high water it is impossible to describe or even to imagine. We could see by the water-marks on the rocks, and by the wisps of straw and rubbish



THE HUNDRED FALLS.

still hanging in the tree-tops, that the flood was a comparatively small one—a mere freshet—and Frith told us that at Upington, in the rainy season, he had seen the river rise fifty feet in twelve hours, covering

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the highest trees that grew on the islands. What must these falls be like at such a time, when a rise of three or four feet added so much to their grandeur! Lulu, while bewailing the absence of his camera, made several sketches, from which the annexed engraving is taken.

On every side fresh cascades sprang out, as if by magic, from the rocks. In fact, whether at high water or at low water, one of the peculiar charms of the place is the extraordinary number of distinct waterfalls which exist here. At Niagara there are two gigantic cataracts, falling side by side at one bound into the head of a gorge seven miles in length. Here there is a succession of cascades and falls—probably a hundred in number—extending along the whole length of a gorge no less than sixteen miles long, into which they plunge one after the other, sometimes at a single bound, sometimes in a series of leaps. During the dry weather many of these cataracts are of great volume, but at wet seasons, when they are magnified a hundred-fold, their mass must be immense. At Niagara the gorge is nowhere deeper than 200 feet. Here the chasm is half as deep again. At Niagara the formation is limestone, and it is calculated that the water has taken some millions of years to excavate the channel. Here the soil is hard granite rock, and it is a pretty problem for geologists to decide, by analogy, the age of this part of the African Continent.

During our explorations we counted, and mapped down, and named, nearly a hundred distinct cascades, and this fact gave me the idea of calling the falls of the Orange River "The Hundred Falls." If the reader will pardon the infliction, I will, instead of attempting any further description of them in prose, record the verses which their wonders inspired:—

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"THE HUNDRED FALLS."

We leave the arid waste, and sea of grass,
Where lurk the dangers of the desert sand,
And, climbing mammoth rocks as smooth as glass,
Behold a scene surpassing fairy-land!
We hear the murmur of the rippling rills
Combining with the voices, sweet and long,
Of bright-winged warblers, whose rich music fills
The air with song.

Bright is the picture to the eye revealed
Of waving meadow, and of shady glen:
The land of paradise seems here concealed
By careless nature from the gaze of men.
Led by contending waters' angry sound,
We reach the jagged cliffs, and towering walls
Beneath which tumble, boom, crash, downward bound
The Hundred Falls.

Transfixed we stand, enraptured with the sight,
Upon the massive walls of silver grey,
Above the mighty waters foaming white,
With mirrored rainbows circling in the spray:
The torrent through its granite channel sweeps,
Impeded by grim rocks on either shore,
As o'er the precipice it madly leaps
With sullen roar.

Scores of snow-white cataracts swiftly gush
From lofty crags, majestic, cold, and bare,
Then headlong down the deep, dark chasm rush,
And quiver flashing in the startled air;
Glittering in the mist, the tempest blew
The silver spray to the abyss below,
Like liquid diamonds scintillating through
A cloud of snow.

More dreadful than the powder's bursting blast,
Than cannon roaring o'er the battle plain,
Louder than thunderbolts from heaven cast,
Or warlike engines heard across the main,
Wilder than the waves of a maddened sea,
Or earthquake, that bewilders and appals,
Were, roaring, writhing, fighting to be free,
One Hundred Falls.

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CHAPTER XXV.

Imprisoned by the flood—A night in mid-stream—A baboon for breakfast—Escaping from prison—We are welcomed with smiles—A visit from a poetical Bastard—Bushman Precipice—Hippopotamus-shooting extraordinary—A civilized dinner—An enterprising settler—A tobacco factory—An island estate—Hottentot doctors.

"CAN'T we manage somehow to get the camera?" said Lulu. "There are two unused plates left in the shields, and I should like to get that Hercules Fall photographed now."

Fitz remarked that we had better think about getting out of this as soon as we could, or we would starve, and let the camera and photographs take care of themselves.

"You may do the thinking if you like," I replied, "but I am afraid you cannot think hard enough to think us off this rock just yet."

"We are safe for the night, nothing will bother us, unless some half-drowned baboon takes refuge on this rock," said Lulu.

"I wish some of them would come to us, instead of howling and barking in that tree over there; roasted baboon isn't bad, when there's nothing else; besides, it would save you and Fritz, for I shall eat you both if we have to stay here very long."

"I'll-vatch-it," chimed in Fritz, "ve vill have some dings to talk about that; I don't was eat up so quick. I'll-vatch-it you don't eat me."

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"As I don't care to eat you raw, let us try and catch some of the drift-wood that is floating by, to make a fire with. It will be very cold before morning on this rock without blankets."

In an hour after my suggestion, we had a pile of wood large enough to last us all night, and a good-sized log to make our fire against; but although the wood had not been in the water long, it was with great difficulty that we coaxed it to burn.

A couple of hours after sunset the moon arose as bright as polished silver. I thought I had seen bright moonlight in America and Russia in the winter, reflected by the snow; but this was more like an electric light, casting its heavy shadows, and making the wet rocks and the water look as bright as a mirror in the sun.

We passed the first part of the night telling stories and keeping our fire up; and when we began to get sleepy we took turns in watching and making fires, while the others slept. I took the first watch, and kept warm and awake by walking around the rock island, and fishing out all the wood I could reach. Lulu and "I'll-vatch-it" slept so soundly I thought it a pity to wake them, and let them slumber on, until dawn notified the approach of another day. Then I called out, "Get up or your coffee will get cold, gentlemen."

The Teuton got up groaning, "*Der Stein ist sehr kalt und hart*," while Lulu had rheumatics so bad in his shoulders that he could not rise without help.

While I was leaning over to assist him, something struck me behind and knocked me over him. I thought it was "I'll-vatch-it" up to some lark, when I heard him calling out, "Come quick." I was up in an instant,

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and saw him close behind me struggling with the limb of a tree. I sprang forward, and jumping over the bough, helped him to raise it high enough to clear Lulu; then we let go of it, and the flood carried it away. If "I'll-vatch-it" had not been "vatching-it," or if it had been night and we all asleep, we should surely have all been swept off the rock to join the majority.

"Did you get burned, Lulu? that tree must have swept the whole fire on you."

"No," he replied, "the log rolled over the fire, or I should have been; but it has knocked the rheumatics out of me."

While we were raking the fire together, bang went a gun, and on looking around we saw "I'll-vatch-it" had shot a baboon; he threw it down by the fire, saying in German—he seemed to reserve his mother tongue for his more serious moments,—

"We must thank Providence for sending this. It's enough to last us two or three days."

"Yes," said Lulu, "it will last a long time, as far as I am concerned. I draw the line at eating my cousins. If Dr. Tanner could live forty days on pure water, I'm sure I shall get fat on this muddy liquid, as there is plenty of it. You are welcome to the monkey."

The simian emitted a strong odour when roasting on the coals, and tasted very much the same; but we made a good breakfast off it. We could not entice Lulu, however, to taste it. The smell, he said, was enough for him; he was familiar with it, having smelled it before, at menageries and zoological gardens.

After breakfast we examined the rock, and found the water had fallen about six inches. "I'll-vatch-it," still speaking in German, said,—

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"It will recede fast, as there could not be continued rain at this time of the year. We have much to thank kind Providence for; this rock being placed here, the food sent us, and the flood being no greater than it was."

"Yes," I said, "you are quite right; but I would have much preferred to thank Providence for not sending the flood at all, then there would have been no need to send food and place convenient rocks. But your Prussian military training has accustomed you to depend too much on your officers and not enough on yourself."

"This is not half as bad as being shot at by the French cannons and rifles, is it?" said Lulu. "Besides, you are at liberty to leave this rock any time without orders."

"Well, we are not so badly off as we were in the desert, without water. We slept on the ground then, and if we have the ground to sleep on now, we have plenty of liquor to drink; the music of the laughing waters lulls you to sleep, monkeys offer themselves for food, the generous trees tear themselves from the rocks of their birth to fan you with their branches. What more do you want?"

"Vat more my vants is? Plendy. Von leetle glass von lager beer is so better as every dings you speak. You can dem trees und monkeys, und vatter und all, have yourselefs. What you dinks, Mr. Lulu?"

"Oh, I think you are right. A little common chop and lager beer is good enough for me, and almost any place is better than this rock to sleep on. Besides, we can sleep without the water, whether laughing or crying, to sing to us."

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The sun was getting very warm and my eyelids were getting heavy, so I went to sleep in the warm sun, which was much more comfortable than the cold moonlight.

About four in the afternoon I woke, hearing Lulu and "I'll-vatch-it" saying the water had run down a yard. Such joyous news soon brought me to my feet, when I saw a ridge of rocks a little to the left of us peeping through the water. If we could reach it, we could follow it to where we had left the camera and our lunch the day before.

To get the latter was most important, as Lulu had eaten nothing for over thirty hours, and drinking so much muddy water might make him ill. He would not listen to my attempting to go for it that night, as "I'll-vatch-it" said the ridges of rock would be bare enough in the morning to get them without much risk, but the danger would be in crossing the rapids between us and them.

That night no one slept; we talked until daylight, when "I'll-vatch-it" and I, having finished the rest of the baboon, started to wade across the swift current. The water had not fallen so much as it did the day before, and the current was still strong and deep, so being much the strongest swimmer of the party, I went first.

With clothes tied up in a small tight bundle, and strapped with my braces to the top of my head, I felt my way slowly along the rocky bottom, which was so slimy and slippery that my feet ran out from under me several times. The current soon deepened so rapidly, that I could not touch bottom any longer, so I struck out with all my might, making for a rock about ten yards below me on the opposite side. I strained every nerve

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to battle with the swift waters, and prevent them from carrying me past, and, just as I thought I was going by it, my breast struck a submerged rock, knocking the wind out of me. However, I grabbed it, and hung on like grim death to a dead nigger.

Pulling myself out on the rock, and looking down to see what made my chest smart so, I found it was not all there; but the danger was past, and the rest of the way was through pools and holes, with but little current, so, after fetching camera, ropes, lunch, and all from their hiding-place, I beckoned to the others to follow me. Lulu came first, making a dash into the torrent, and swimming for his life, the water driving him along like a cork. Holding the rock with one hand and reaching out with the other, I caught him by the arm, and letting the current swing him around the lower side of the rock, hauled him up. Both of us were blue and shivered with the cold, and leaving him to dry, I went to the assistance of the German, who was afraid to trust himself to "the mercy of a rude stream" that might "for ever hide" him.

I beckoned to him to go higher up before entering the water, so as to have more chance of getting across before the stream bore him down: he had not gone far when he stepped into a hole and disappeared, but soon came up, puffing like a porpoise, and climbed out on to a rock, where he became a fixture. Fetching a rope and wading out as near to him as I could, I coiled the rope up nicely, first wetting it to make it heavier, and, swinging it around my head, hurled it like a lasso within a yard of him. He made the quickest move I ever saw him make to catch it before the current took it away. Twisting it around

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his right hand he plunged into the whirling waters, made two or three strokes before I could haul in the slack, and, finding that he was being carried away, stopped swimming and caught the rope with both hands. As the line tautened the current caught him

THE HERCULES FALLS AT HALF FLOOD.

and swept him round against the rocks with great force, hurting his knee and elbow, but fortunately breaking no bones. With assistance he waded and floundered up to the ledge and across to where I had left Lulu, who, although he had had nothing to eat for so long, had not touched the lunch as yet, waiting for us to

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join. But we both refused, as we had eaten our breakfast before taking our bath. While he ate, "Ill-vatch-it" limped about with his wet clothes on, saying they would dry quicker, and I slipped into mine; and we were soon as happy as could be under the circumstances. Lulu insisted on going and photographing the Hercules Falls before the water got any lower, though to do this we had to go down below them, to the rock from which we had taken them before. This we managed by the aid of the ropes: and many a year will elapse before these Falls will be photographed again with so much water running over them.

What lunch there was left, we ate that evening. It was not much for three good feeders, but we were satisfied that it was no less, and slept that night under two rocks as soundly as if we were in the Grand Hotel, though we felt as if we were not far from the North Pole when we woke up next morning, shivering with the cold.

For an hour or two we did not seem to enjoy ourselves. Hunger and cold are not conducive to hilarity and pleasant thoughts. However, we had serious business in hand, and the exercise of collecting our "traps" and reconnoitring our route soon put fresh warmth into us. The water had fallen a good deal during the night, and we were able to get back without difficulty to "Refuge Rock," to fetch the guns we had left behind. After the guns, breakfast. After wading through several branches of the river and across several gorges which were dry when we crossed them before the flood overtook us, but down which the waters now tumbled in volume sufficient to make a respectable cascade, we came to an island which was covered with vegetation and filled with feathered

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game. We were not long in shooting pheasants and doves enough for a breakfast or a dinner; at least we made a meal of them; and without salt they beat anything I ever ate off a silver grill. To have seen us eat, you would have imagined that we were hollow all the way down to the feet.

Thus refreshed we were better prepared for the difficulties of the remaining distance between us and the waggons. Three hours of alternate creeping, crawling, climbing, falling, swimming, sliding, sticking, slipping, stumbling, tumbling, wading, walking, brought us in sight of "home." The dogs ran out to meet us, barking and leaping for joy, and Jan followed them with tears in his eyes; we could not tell whether they were tears of sorrow or joy, but gave him the benefit of the doubt.

"If maister had not come back to-day," he said, "I should have gone over to Coe Smith's to-morrow, to ask for help to search for maister, and bring maister something to eat. I was sure maister was too knowing to get washed into the Falls; but then I was afraid he would starve. I remember," he added, "that time when I was lost on the desert, and I thought maister might be as bad as I was then."

While we were eating our supper Korap came back with the cattle, and, for the first time, smiled when he beheld us, which richly paid us for all our risks and trouble.

Next morning Coe Smith came to see us, bringing with him several gallons of milk and a quarter of mutton; he had only just heard that we were here on his farm, and had come to say that we were welcome to use his werf and kraal. When we explained to him our object in visiting the "groot waterfalls,"

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as he called them, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, who sent the wind that blew the clouds that rained the water that made the river that ran over the rocks, and made the Falls that brought you here to see them, or I should never have had the pleasure of knowing you."

This speech was highly poetical for an illiterate half-breed, and I told him he was a born diplomat, which he rather resented, until "I'll-vatch-it" explained to him what it meant.

He asked me if I had seen the "Bushman Precipice," and without waiting for a reply, said it was on the other side of the river, just below the big fall. Near there lived a Boer who was frequently losing sheep and goats, and who laid these losses at the door of the hyenas, or wolves, as they call them. So he set a watch for them, but found instead of quadrupeds, a number of two-legged wolves in the shape of Bushmen, to whom they gave chase. The Bushmen ran towards the Falls, and, the river being very low, they crossed the outer chasms, closely followed by their pursuers, who fired at them at every opportunity. The poor Bushmen in their haste to escape the danger behind them, never noticed until too late that a fearful precipice yawned in front of them, and, running headlong over it, fell into the abyss over three hundred feet below. Needless to say they have never stolen any sheep since.

"If you like to come to the other side of yon mountain," said Coe, "to a large flat where my cattle are grazing, you can find a clump of koodoo. The ground being so level, they will be difficult to get at, as they can see anything for miles; or if you prefer it, and have not had enough of the river, I will show you a

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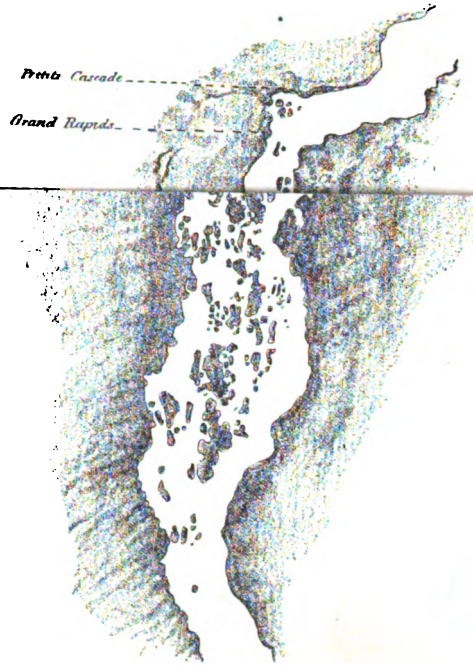

PLAN OF THE HUNDRED FALLS OF THE ORANGE RIVER.

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place where you can shoot hippopotamus, some twenty miles further down. They are beginning to get plentiful again, since the Koranna war."

We elected to go after Behemoth; and after several days' search were rewarded at last by seeing the fresh tracks of two old ones and one young one, where they had evidently come out of the river that morning. There, in the middle of the water, we saw rounded objects protruding, evidently the backs or heads of hippopotami taking a quiet bath. Stealing along under cover of a bush or thick-branched tree, and taking steady aim, we fired several times at them, only to find that our bullets were utterly unable to make any impression on the solid armour. Our imagination, wrought up to the highest pitch, and fed by the optical illusion which gave seeming motion to objects fixed in the moving water, had converted the water-worn rocks into hippopotami! No wonder we could not bring blood out of the solid stone! After repeating this mistake several times, our ardour became dulled, and I began to wish I hadn't come, but had stayed instead with Lulu, who had preferred to spend the day in making a diagram of the river in the vicinity of the Falls and taking more photographs—a task much more congenial to his taste than hunting.

When we returned we said nothing about shooting at rocks in mistake for behemoths, but "murder will out;" and there is the whole story in black and white, for any one to laugh at who will.

Staying a few days longer, to make a complete plan of the Falls, we at last bade them farewell. Coe Smith happened to come again to see us the day that we were leaving, bringing more milk, and we gave him some coffee and a silk handkerchief for his wife,

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with which he was very much pleased; and, by his advice, we stayed that night at Orange Berg Werf. The next day it rained hard all day, causing us to make very slow progress; and it was not until the following day, at noon, that we came to the river again, at Nicht Gedaght, where there are several islands, covered with a deep, rich alluvial deposit. Here we received a real old Canadian welcome from the proprietor of the islands, Mr. Fryer, who insisted on our staying a day or two with him. We were introduced to his wife, who in a short space of time, with the help of her Bushman girls and Koranna servants, prepared us a dinner equal to anything that could have been given at an English farm-house. For vegetables we had potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes, and squash. The first we had not tasted for many months, so you can imagine what a treat they were. Then there was maize bread, as light and white as wheaten bread, but much sweeter, made from a kind of snow-white maize, which they call "brod mealies," a pile of which nearly reached the ceiling in one corner of the house—the flour being ground in a coffee-mill, by hand.

After dinner, Mr. Fryer piloted us over his estate. On all sides were evidences of his skill as architect and builder, as well as farmer. The house, erected by himself, was built of bricks made of clay, moulded with his own hands, and properly burnt, and put together with mortar composed of clay, with a little sand added.

A few feet from the house door was a little *sluit*, or canal, where a dozen quacking ducks were chattering and washing their clothes, without taking them off. Along the edge of the water, which wound in and out like an elongated python, were banana-trees, fig-trees,

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peach-trees, cherry, apple, and pear-trees, also the huge prickly pear. Then we were taken into a long building, from the cross-poles in the roof of which hung the leaves of the tobacco-plant, of prolific growth. Here an old German, assisted by a brown man, was twisting them into long ropes, and cutting them into rolls about a foot long and four inches in diameter, which they would sell for one pound apiece. We wended our way from here to what seemed to be a large primeval forest, which we skirted till we crossed another small canal on a lower level, which irrigated a field of wheat, recently sown. This field again was bordered on the other side by one of the many branches of the main river, that cut for itself a deep gully to gurgle through. Crossing this gorge by a rude bridge of poles reaching half way up the steep bank on the other side, we climbed with some difficulty up the remainder into a field where maize had been grown. Each field was a separate island, on whose rocky bed the floods had deposited a rich bank of fertile soil, fit to grow anything; and what Nature had begun, Mr. Fryer had completed by conducting the water through artificial channels, wherever it was needed. Some of the fields were very large, some of them quite small; and all bounded by huge boulders and broken rocks.

The crops were all gathered, with the exception of the giant cabbages and huge Kaffir water-melons that the light frosts would not injure. Mr. Fryer called special attention to his grape-vines. They certainly looked very vigorous, climbing over poles that spanned deep, rapid torrents. Passing on still further, we came out into one of the wildest bits of scenery that could be imagined, the home of thousands of rock-pigeons, who had their nesting-place in these almost

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inaccessible rocks, where they had bred from time immemorial. Mr. Fryer said he had no gun and no time to shoot them, so, with his permission, "I'll-vatch-it" and I organized an attack on them that evening, when they returned to roost, which resulted in our bringing back to the house scores of the plump, handsomely-marked Noah's-ark doves, and leaving behind sundry pieces of skin from our elbows, knees, &c. That evening, at supper, our hospitable host became very interested at our description of the wonders of the Hundred Falls. Although they were at his very door, he had never been to see them, as he had always been led to believe that they were inaccessible.

While we were conversing, a Koranna Hottentot would stick his head in the door and call out in a familiar way, "Boss, I want some tobacco," or whatever else he might require. There seemed a friendly relationship existing between master and man. Mr. Fryer always replied to them in a fatherly kind of way, and his skerm was always lively with the happy laugh of the boys and girls, chaffing one another over their pipes, which they handed around after taking a whiff or two, so that they passed from mouth to mouth until they required refilling. When a navvy shares a pot of beer, he wipes it with his dirty sleeve before drinking after his mate; but not one of these Hottentots ever thought it necessary to take any such precaution before sucking at his neighbour's pipe.

Mr. Fryer had an almost superstitious belief in the efficacy of some of the Hottentot doctors' medicine, and gave me several instances of wonderful cures—one, especially, of fever. One of his neighbours had a son very ill with a kind of malarial fever, accompanied by ague. As a *dernier ressort*, a Hottentot

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doctor was sent for, who gave him a couple of pieces of gum, extracted from a bush that they call "Wanu." This was to be repeated, night and morning, for two days; but in three hours after the first dose the patient was better, and the last dose of the second day was not taken, for the lad recovered directly, and has had no symptom of the fever since.

Among other things, Mr. Fryer said that, in some seasons, the leaves of the willow-trees are sticky with a kind of sweet substance, which the natives wash off, and ferment it into beer, and he was surprised when I told him that possibly it was the secretion of an aphis that infests the leaves, as the maple-trees of America produce the same kind of thing, which the bees gather.

When we took our departure, Mr. Fryer good-naturedly insisted on half-filling our waggon with vegetables, which were very acceptable, although it was somewhat embarrassing to accept them, without in some way being able to return the compliment.

As we drove away, we could not help thinking what a contrast this place presented with the best efforts of the Boers in any part of the country; and it was not difficult to imagine a picture of these mud-formed, rock-girt islands, under the ownership of a dirty, lazy, but "God-fearing" Boer. These elect people, however, have no need to work: "God shall help us" is their answer to any suggestion of the kind. The philosophy which is crystallized in the proverb that "God helps those who help themselves," and that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," does not commend itself to their pure, innocent hearts.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

At Upington—The pleasures of civilization—A fair gardener and a garden fair—A notable irrigation work—A Bushman's *bonne-bouche*—A happy family—A dangerous ford—Patience and perseverance—A sharp trader—A grand tea-party—A Boer wedding party—Catechized about the Queen—Prieska—Hard lines for the Bushmen—Froude's "honest Boer" at last!—Hope Town again—A sale by auction—Honest Boers—"Interviewed"—General conclusions.

In the afternoon of the second day, after having said good-bye to the kind-hearted, hospitable Mr. Fryer, we came in sight of the white church of the town of Upington—so named after the Premier of Cape Colony. Seeing a new, zinc-roofed, brick house, surrounded by a verandah, and looking very civilized in comparison with the mud-walled houses of the Boers, and the canvas- and grass-covered huts of the natives, I inquired who lived there. A little nigger, with yellow, knotty hair, said in Afrikander, "That is Mr. Scott's, the big boss's, house." Driving up, I found the "big boss," or, to speak more respectfully, the Resident Commissioner,[1] at home, and, having introduced myself, and delivered my letter from Col.

[1] As Resident Commissioner for the English Government, Mr. John Scott is the right man in the right place, always tempering justice with kindness—and thoroughly understanding the natives and half-breeds, by whom he is very much appreciated. The moment they heard Korannaland was annexed, they sent a petition to the Cape Government, praying them to allow Mr. Scott to remain amongst them.

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Schermbrücker, Mr. Scott kindly offered us a room, and insisted on our making it our home as long as we liked. After finding a place to outspan, and getting permission of Captain Dyerson, of the northern police force, whose barracks were in sight on the banks of the Orange river, to send our oxen out on their Veldt, we returned to tea, and were presented to Mrs. Scott, who made us so welcome that we felt at home immediately. The kindness of our clever host and accomplished hostess shall never be forgotten. What a pleasure it was to put one's legs once more under a table presided over by a lady—bless them all!—and to share in the delights of a civilized meal, garnished with the conversation of an English family.

Like most pioneers in a new country, Mr. Scott is jack-of-all-trades. With his official duties he mixes up doctoring, blacksmithing, carpentering, tinsmithing, waggon-making, &c., &c. His newly-built, brick residence, with stables, out-houses, and garden, would compare favourably with those of any African town. It stands on the high bank on the northern side of the Orange river, commanding a splendid view of the picturesque river, whose islands, covered with dense green foliage, are in agreeable contrast with the barren hills on either side. In a few years the fruit-trees and vines they have planted will be laden with luscious fruit, to reward them for their labours in elaborating the system of irrigation which is just completed.

Mrs. Scott is the gardener, and showed me a beautiful collection of native flowers which she has gathered together, and is collecting with the greatest success. One especially attracted my attention, a liliaceous bulb, growing in profusion in the island, bearing white

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and pink flowers, which emit a delicious perfume. In contrast to this, Mrs. Scott pointed out a curious plant, without leaves, resembling a cactus, the fleshy stems growing in a bunch, with a border of flowers about ten inches across, and looking as if cut out of purple-brown velvet, marked throughout with bright golden hieroglyphics. This plant Mrs. Scott called the carrion-plant, and well it deserved the name, for when disturbed it emitted an odour which was perfectly unendurable. I had already come across this plant twice in the desert: the first time was early one morning, when my attention was called to it by the brilliant golden markings on the deep, rich-toned flower-head. I dug up a specimen, intending to get Lulu to photograph it when we outspanned, but as soon as it was disturbed it threw out such a sickly odour that I nearly gave up the job in disgust. However, I persevered and placed it in the waggon, but it soon protested against the jolting of the vehicle, and emitted such a pungent stench that even Jan, the driver, had to get out and walk. When we halted it was placed behind a bush, but even then its odour caused Lulu to feel sea-sick, and made me so drowsy that I was obliged to bury it bodily beneath the sand. While doing this the narcotic effect was so powerful that I nearly fell asleep. The second time I saw the plant I was inclined to give it a wide berth, but selected some small specimens which I brought home, and which will be found in the large collection which I gave to the Kew Gardens. (See Appendix, p. 447.)

The system of irrigation above referred to deserves more than a passing reference. The *sluit* or canal, which renders fertile the grey sandy deposit that formerly produced nothing but a few tobacco-trees and

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thorn-bushes, is thirteen miles in length, and was constructed at an actual cash outlay of less than 1000*l.* —an absurdly small sum when its length is considered, and especially seeing that in many places the channel through which it is conveyed had to be blasted out in some places, while in others aqueducts had to be constructed. The tools and dynamite were bought out of the proceeds of a six per cent. Government loan for that amount which Mr. Scott effected, and the labour was chiefly, if not entirely, paid for by giving an allotment of land to each native who completed his quota of work. The opening-day will be a memorable one among the inhabitants, many of whom came hundreds of miles in their carts and ox-waggons to witness the ceremony of diverting the waters of the Orange River through the *sluit.* The success of the work ought to arouse to similar efforts the lethargic Boers on the other side of the river, who have miles of river frontage, with large flats of rich alluvial soil, only awaiting the hand of industry to carry to them this water, which would convert their parched surface into veritable Edens.

Having fished, shot the geese, ducks, and pheasants, and hunted the monkeys that abounded along the river, and nearly worn our welcome out, we "traded" all our remaining guns, ammunition, &c., &c., for oxen, and bade adieu to our very kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Scott, and started with our caravan to Hope Town, 250 miles distant. As the evening closed in, just before dark, we were all startled by a brilliant light, like the rays from an electric arc-lamp, suddenly illuminating the scene. The sky was dark and starless, and looking up I saw a beautiful white ball of fire, apparently as big as my broad-brimmed hat, shoot in a straight line across

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the heavens. It seemed to start about a quarter of the distance from the earth to the zenith, and to travel in a straight line half-way across the arc, lasting at least twenty seconds, and vanishing without noise. The natives were terribly frightened, and wanted us to turn back to Upington; but we went on, and passed the night at an old Boer's werf, where there were two families of Berg Bushmen encamped—if the removal of a few stones that completely covered the ground, in order to make a soft place to sleep on, can be called an encampment. Two of the men and one of the women were tall, handsomely built, and graceful in their movements. The children, of whom there were a dozen or more, were really pretty. One of them was on his knees, in the sand, licking up the marrow that fell from some bones which an elder Bushman was knocking on a stone. The stench from it was so great we were obliged to walk away, when the old Boer said that the bones were those of a horse of his that had died from disease, and that the Bushmen ate all kinds of putrid, diseased meat, seemingly without any injury to themselves.

Next morning we were awakened before daylight by the voices of the Boer's family and native servants singing hymns—a proof, at any rate, of domestic felicity, if not of religious fervour; for the psalm-singing old hypocrite and his sons were all fathers to children by the same native mother; and yet they all lived happily together in one tent.

When we arrived at Wilkerhout's Drift, a Kaffir, who lived close by, said it had not been crossed for a year; but "I'll-vatch-it" said he had crossed it several times, and knew it well, and that, at this state of the river, the water would not reach half-way to the

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waggon-box. As the waggon was not very tight, after its long travels, we put everything on the seats that was likely to be injured by the water; and with much shouting and smacking of the whips we were soon descending the river bank, jolting over great rocks with bumps that threatened to bring about the complete collapse of the waggon. In a few minutes the leading oxen were up to their necks in water, and then the waggon dropped into a deep hole and nearly overturned. "Everything will be ruined with the water," I cried; "keep their heads up stream!" After passing successfully through perils in the sandy desert, through perils in the rocky wilderness, through perils in the flooded river, it was too much of a joke to see the fruits of all our labours snatched from us at a common ford, almost at the end of our journey! Luckily, the leaders have gained a shallow, the front wheels begin to rise, and the danger is past. The stream rapidly shoals, and in half a minute more we are high and dry on an island. From here to the opposite shore the stream was slow and shallow, and the willing oxen soon climbed the steep bank and slowly pulled our ark out of the flood. But it was a narrow squeak!

The road now lay through trees, making it very difficult for a long span of oxen to keep the waggon from striking the trees at the turns. But "patience and perseverance overcome all difficulties," and, with the sjambok added, they came off victorious this time too.

An hour later, we were at Groot Drink—where a young German, whom I had met at Mr. Scott's, kept a winkel. As there was no grass on this side of the mountain called Asel Fontein, some miles away, the poor oxen were obliged to be content with feeding on

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a shrub called *brak bosch*—the pulpy leaves of which have a strong taste of salt. Here one of our oxen strayed, and, not being able to find it, we made a present of it to old Billy Welles—who keeps a winkel, and does a little "smousing." Besides this, he works the ferry, for which, he told us, he had had only one customer in two years, who, when he was half-way across the ferry, said he had no money. "Your hat will do for me," said old Billy, who, suiting the action to the word, took possession of it.

After crawling along a rough, rocky road, which began to make our oxen's feet tender, we came, after dark, to a little grass, and outspanned our hungry beasts. All hands had to help keep them from straying, while they fed, and we built large fires for the sake of the light to see them by, until the moon rose. Luna seemed as if she would never make her appearance. Our suppers had been prepared some time, but it was past ten o'clock before we dared leave our posts, for fear of losing some of the cattle.

Hard and long drives, and no grass, began to tell on our oxen—the four best of which had just come from grass-land and did not take kindly to the bushes; but in a few days we came to Carboom, where a sergeant of police, and a few natives under him, were stationed. He was very pleased to see some one from England—where he longed to get back—and invited us to dinner; while we, in return, invited him to tea.

To do honour to the entertainment, I was cook. Having procured some eggs from the native police, and some goat's milk of the proprietor of the farm, I essayed to make a custard. Putting the beaten-up eggs and milk into our tin drinking-cups, I placed the

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whole in the kettle, and set it on the coals, covering the lid as well with the hot embers; and, by the time Jan had the meat and coffee cooked, a custard was ready which would have taken a prize at Bertram and Roberts' cookery exhibition.

Not far from Prieska, we stopped at the house of a Boer, one of whose daughters was being married. The farmers of the whole district were present, with their families. Finding I was not a trader, they thought I must be an Englishman, and resented my intrusion by ordering me off. It was with some difficulty that I convinced them that I was not English, when they became very familiar—for them. On ascertaining that I had come to Africa by way of England, they asked me if I had seen the Queen. What did she look like?—how many soldiers had she?—and how many rooms in her house? After answering them according to their understanding, I told them that the Queen had several palaces, each containing, perhaps, 100 rooms.

"How many rooms did you say?" said the host, looking knowingly at his solemn neighbours.

"One hundred," I replied.

"Then how many cattle has the Queen?"

This was a poser—I did not know what to answer—so I said, "About fifty, perhaps." Whereupon the old pastoral patriarch's face actually assumed a slight air of intelligence, as he came close to me, his hand uplifted, saying,—

"You are lying to us Boers. How can the Queen have so many rooms and so few cattle? They would not make dung enough to keep the floors in repair, let alone to make them."

My veracity was doubted, even after "I'll-vatch-it"

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explained that the floors were made of boards, and not of cow-dung, which, to men who had lived all their lives where timber was so scarce, and whose knowledge of the world extended no further than their own "werfs," seemed very unlikely.

Prieska was our next stopping-place—a little town near the Orange river, where there is a ferry. The fertile flats are watered by a running spring—which is led out through the public square, in one corner of which is a new brick church, close to which, of course, are the police-station and the prison. Several shops, owned by that most persevering of all tradesmen, the Israelite, and an hotel, complete the list of buildings. At the baker's shop we ordered enough bread to last us to Hope Town—for which we had to wait until they baked the next day; at another we purchased some tins of Italian butter, as sweet and as fresh as the day it was first put up. I was only sorry I had not known of it some months before. To any one going into the interior, I strongly recommend it. We were entertained that evening, by the Inspector of Police, the Clerk of the Court, and the Magistrate, and I was presented with the bow from which the arrows were shot that had killed, first a Boer, and then the policeman who tried to arrest the murderer, a Bushman, who was now in jail awaiting his trial.

The police themselves say the poor Bushman is hardly dealt with. The big game is driven from the country by the Boers and their flocks; the small game he cannot hunt, as his poisoned arrows and bows are always taken from him; so he is obliged to steal some of the flocks to exist, for which he is punished by depriving him of his liberty which he loves so well. Is it a wonder he resists capture so desperately?

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But the march of civilization has no ears for the cries of those poor wretches whom it crushes if they stand in its way.

Near the Brak river we met the first friendly Boer we had seen in the country. He was really sociable, and condescended to come into our waggon and help us eat our supper, and actually asked us more questions about the Kalahari than about the *verdomde Englander*. Here at last, I thought, we have found Froude's honest, unbigoted, intelligent Boer. He was a sheep- and ostrich-farmer on a large scale, and employed a good number of Hottentot servants, and the conversation presently turned on the position of the black races, of whom I felt sure this Boer, so phenomenally free from Anglophobia, would have something fresh and interesting to say.

"They are a worthless lot of lazy, lying thieves," he said. And then the grim look on his countenance relaxed as he seemed to repent of so wholesale a denunciation of them. "I will tell you a funny story," he continued, "which will make you laugh;" and his face beamed with pleasure as he related the following charming anecdote:—

"I served one of the rascals out the other day. He came here and asked for a drink, saying he had been looking for his master's, my neighbour's, horses, for three days, and could not find them. The lazy brute had never looked for them, he had been sleeping on the Veldt, as I had seen them, not one hour from here, that very day. 'You sleepy-headed liar,' I said to myself, 'I will pay you,' so I handed him half a glass of 'Cape Smoke,' and told him to drink.

"'No, Boss,' he said, 'me no drink before de old Boss.'

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"'Go on,' I replied; 'swallow it down quick,' which the black rascal did.

"'What!' I shouted, 'you black devil! you dare to drink before a Boer;' and, catching him by the neck, I took this sjambok and cut him at every blow. You would have laughed to have heard him howl and beg. 'I'll teach you to dare to drink before a Boer,' I said, as I kicked him out of the door."

Next morning, after paying our kind-hearted, facetious Boer a half-crown for the privilege of outspanning and watering, we started, and before noon found some dried grass that the cattle licked up with avidity. At every stage the country became greener, and the grass better. Evidently rain had fallen recently, as the dams and pools were full of water.

On arriving at Hope Town we outspanned near the church, and sending our oxen to the Town Veldt, made arrangements to sell our oxen, waggons, &c., by auction on the following Saturday, when all the Boer farmers from the neighbourhood would come in for *Nachmall*, or communion service, on Sunday.

The principal shopkeeper told me that the customers coming out of the church had to be watched to keep them from stealing. When any culprits are caught, all the shopkeepers do is to "charge them"—not at the Police Court, but in their bill—for what they have stolen, and they usually pay it without any demur. How little like their honest, industrious, bulb-growing, ditch-digging forefathers in the Netherlands!

Saturday came slowly along in this quiet town. Lulu was afraid I should lose patience, and take it into my head to trek all the way to Cape Town, and was delighted when, one day, we drove to the Railway Station to leave our collection in charge of the

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station-master. On the way we passed an ostrich-farm of some thousands of acres, enclosed with a wire fence.

At last the auction took place; the property fetching about one-fourth of what we should have had to pay to buy it again next day, and at noon on Sunday we left Hope Town, arriving at Cape Town on the Tuesday morning.

The steamer, the *Drummond Castle*, left on the following day, so that I was unable to call upon the many friends whose hospitality I had received on my former visit. I had, instead, to go through the ordeal of being "interviewed" by a representative of the *Cape Argus*, who published a flattering statement of the benefit that would be conferred on the Colony by the new light which my journey "through the Kalahari" had thrown on that part of South Africa.

On the voyage home I was fortunate enough to meet on board the steamer no less an authority than Mr. George Baden Powell, C.M.G., M.P., who, I was glad to find, agreed entirely with my high opinion of the natural advantages of the country, and with my very different opinion of the character of the Boers. Mr. Baden Powell did not pass through the Kalahari; but his description of the adjoining country of Bechuanaland has been given not only in the recent admirable letters from this country, published in the *Times*, of which it is an open secret that he is the author; but in the paper read by him before the London Chamber of Commerce, on the occasion of their reception of Sir Charles Warren, G.C.M.G. So far as the Boer is concerned, I can go a little further than Mr. Powell, and say, so far as I can judge from those I came in contact with,

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that he is a non-progressive, selfish, illiterate, English-hating hypocrite. So far as the future of the Kalahari —so-called Desert—is concerned, I can assert that it has before it, in English hands, almost, if not quite, as bright a future as Mr. Baden Powell anticipates for Bechuanaland.

THE END.

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APPENDIX.

THE FLORA OF THE KALAHARI.

With the exception of a few special grasses which I gave to the Berlin Botanic Gardens, I presented the whole of my collection of the flora of the Kalahari to the Royal Gardens, Kew, receiving the following autographic letter from Sir Joseph Hooker, in addition to the usual formal acknowledgment:—

"Royal Gardens, Kew,
"*August 24th*, 1885.

"Dear Sir,

"I must write a line with the enclosed formal acknowledgment, to tell you how much gratified I am on receiving the very fine collection of most interesting plants, which you have had the goodness to present to the Royal Gardens.

"I am, my dear Sir,
"Faithfully yours,
(Sd.) "Jos. D. Hooker.

"G. A. Farini, Esq."

I also received the following letter from the Curator, with a list of the names of the various seeds and plants:—

"Royal Gardens, Kew,
"*August 24th*, 1885.

"My dear Mr. Farini,

"According to promise, I send you a list of the fine collection of bulbs and seeds you have so kindly presented to the Gardens, and assure you they shall be carefully attended to.

"With kind regards,
"I am, yours faithfully,
"John Smith,
"*Curator*."

The following is the list referred to by Mr. Smith. The first column contains the references to the various specimens; the second to the genus as determined by Mr. Smith; and the third my explanatory remarks. A space has been specially reserved for them in

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the new South African House, and the accurate names will be ascertained when they are growing. I trust that among them may be found not only ornamental flowers, but plants useful for edible or industrial purposes.

1.	2 large bulbs	Crinum or buphane	Balloon-shaped flower.
2.	1 „ bulb	Buphane	Poison for arrows.
3.	1 „ „	Crinum sp.	Red flower, grows in sand.
4.	3 bulbs	? Galtonia	Fibrous scales.
5.	6 „	Crinum sp.	Small finger shaped.
6.	16 „		Necks one foot long, narrow.
7.	50 „	Scilla sp.	Edible, as large as hen's eggs.
8.	1 plant	Euphorbia caput medusæ	Good stem.
9.	1 „	Watsonia sp.	Edible.
10.	Flower heads	Compositæ	Grows in deep valleys.
11.	1 packet seeds	Momordiea sp.	
12.	1 „ „	Momordiea sp.	Small fruit.
13.	9 tubers		Edible, musk-scented.
14.	1 tuber	? Kalanchoe sp.	
15.	1 „	Tannin root, sent to Museum.	
16.	1 packet seeds		Bushman grass, the best that grows on the Kalahari.
17.	1 „ „		Thorn-bush seeds.
18.	1 „ grass seeds		
19.	1 packet seeds	Aloe sp.	
20.	1 „ „	Buphane seeds	Poison bulb.
21.	1 „ bulbs		Kind of sorrel, pretty flower.
22.	1 „ seeds		Double-spined thorn (one straight, one hooked).
23.	6 bulbs	Lilium sp.	
24.	1 packet		Purple fox-tail grass.
25.	1 „		Seeds of liliaceous plant.
26.	1 „	Dipterocarp	Flowering shrub.
27.	1 „		Seeds taken from crop of sand-grouse.
28.	1 „		Winged seeds, pillyass, or witch-bush.
29.	1 bulb	Crocus sp.	
30.	1 packet seeds		Sweet-smelling flower, musky odour.
31.	1 „ „	Giant vasiform.	
32.	1 „ grass seeds		Resembling timothy (height four feet).
33.	1 packet berries		Juice of which will curdle milk.
34.	1 „		Cotton seeds (bush 1 ft. high).
35.	6 small bulbs	Amaryllida sp.	
36.	1 packet seeds		Creeper.
37.	1 small melon.		
38.	1 packet		Fine grass seeds (mixed).
39.	1 „	Umbellifera	Tall bush without leaves.
40.	1 „		Sama seeds (wild melon eaten by natives).

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41.	1 packet	seeds	Giant water-melon (mangatan).
42.	1 „	„ .	
43.	1 „	„ .	Sweet-smelling plant & flower.
44.	1 „	„ .	Taken from crops of sand-grouse.
45.	1 „	„ .	Berry called Raum by the Bushmen.
46.	1 „	„ .	Whitte haat-tree.
47.	1 „	„ .	Handsome prickly shrub, red berries.
48.	1 „	„ .	From crops of small birds.
49.	1 „	„ .	Same as 34.
50.	2 packets	„ .	Parasite, like mistletoe.
51.	1 packet	„ .	Climbing vine, edible.
52.	2 packets	„ .	Found in black ant-hill.
53.	1 packet	„ . Asclepiad.	Climber.
54.	1 „	„ .	Mixed grass.
55.	1 „	„ . Crinum sp.	
56.	1 „	„ .	Musk-smelling flower, tubers like sweet potatoes.
57.	1 „	„ .	Yellow flower (purple petals).
58.	1 „	„ .	Elephant-grass, grows eight ft. high, seeds as large as clover.
59.	1 „	„ .	Fleshy stalks: creeper.
60.	1 „	„ .	
61.	1 asclepiad		
62.	1 flowering shrub.		
63.	1 packet	seeds	Most beautiful flowering shrub, important.
64.	1 „	„ . Aloe sp.	
65.	1 „	„ .	Yellow vine (cattle fatten on it).
66.	1 „	„ .	Used as coffee, acacia family.
67.	1 „	„ .	Taken from crops of birds.
68.	1 „	„ .	Small climbing gourd.
69.	2 packets	„ .	Cape gooseberry.
70.	1 packet	„ .	
71.	1 „	„ .	Red berries.
72.	1 „	„ .	Flowering shrub, Lake N'Gami.
73.	1 „	„ .	Vine, scarlet conical fruit, edible.
74.	1 „	„ .	Hair-grass.
75.	1 „	„ .	Brown and yellow flower.
76.	1 „	„ .	Mimosa.
77.	1 „	„ .	Pods giraffe-tree, or stink-wood.
78.	1 „	bulbs	Edible.
79.	1 stem	. Mesembryanthemum.	
80.	1 packet		Various seeds, mixed.
81.	1 tin, with four growing roots	. Stapelia sp.	"Carrion plant." A four-cornered, fleshy leaf; flower star-shaped, three inches across, with four pointed leaves arching forward. Colour, rich brown, marked with hieroglyphics of a bright golden colour.

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THE REPTILES OF THE KALAHARI.

Snakes.

Of poisonous snakes you hear more than you see. We were frequently weeks without seeing one. The most common is the "horned man" (*Clotho cornuto*), deriving its name from two little horns above each eye. It is short and flat, varying in colour, sometimes a lightish-brown or buff all over, and often marked with little dots at the angles of the light chestnut marblings. Poison-sacs very large in comparison with its size. Lives principally on lizards.

Next to this little snake the terrible puff-adder is the most frequently seen. Its flat broad head, in the shape of the ace of spades, rests on its coils, as it lies torpid under a bush. It is slow in its movements, except in the act of striking, which is nearly as quick as thought, though it has to be very much irritated before it will bite a stick, which it rarely does the second time. It is very dangerous to the natives, as it never runs away or tries to escape into a hole at their approach; they are usually bitten by it while running, their foot coming in contact with it; this never occurs while walking, as then they see its trail in the sand and avoid it, instead of tracking and killing it. The reptile grows as long as four feet six inches; in the middle it is as thick as a man's arm. It is a round, heavy, stony-eyed, venemous-looking serpent, having the power to inflate itself and flatten itself out either way from the middle, when it suddenly tapers to the head and tail. Colour, dark and light brown, with checkered markings.

Along the rivers the *Boom slange* (*Dendrophidae*), or tree-snake, is found, seeking its food of birds and their eggs. It varies in colour very much—green, brown, olive, and mottled, according to the colour of the trees it inhabits, thus affording another striking example of power to imitate nature. It is considered very poisonous by the natives, and no doubt it is, as I found its poison-glands as large as those of the puff-adder. It is not a very dangerous snake, as it takes its six feet of clammy, shudder-inspiring length away as soon it hears or sees you approach.

The capelle, or *Spuugh slange*, and *Nap hap*, or spitting-snake, is supposed to have the power of spitting its poison some distance—an idea which was not verified when I irritated several. Like the Indian cobra it never runs from an adversary, being ever ready to dispute the right of way with all comers. The natives say it will begin the attack. Raising its head up, it inflates itself, forming

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a graceful arch, and moves very slowly, but when within reach will dart forward, striking with the rapidity of lightning. A slight blow on the back, however, soon disables it. It is a good climber, and takes to the water. Its poison-fangs and glands are about the same size as in the puff-adder. Sometimes its colour is a bright yellow-brown, uniform in colour; sometimes variegated with irregular spots; others have broad yellow rings on the fore-part of the body; some are nearly black with the "spectacle mark" on the neck like the cobra. Its length is from five to six feet.

The long, greyish-white, narrow-striped *Schaap-sticker* (*Coronella Africa*), or sheep-sticker, is supposed by the Boers and the natives to be very poisonous, and the death of many a sheep has been accredited to their poisonous fangs, especially if one was found near by; but upon examination I could find neither fangs nor poison-glands, and voted the little reptile a harmless, much-maligned creature. But I could never convince the pig-headed Boer or the superstitious savage that they were harmless. Some of them are a brownish colour, intermingled with spots in rows along their whole length. Their shape is very tapering from their head to the tail; their length ranges from two to four feet.

On the veldt is occasionally found a round, greyish-brown, pointed-headed snake with a white belly, about three feet long and an inch thick, but tapering gradually to a point for six inches from the tail. The Bastards call it a *Veldt slange* It is poisonous.

Several times while out hunting we saw a large yellow snake, that was rapid in his movements, always disappearing into a katteah or meer-cat's hole before we could get near enough to dispatch it. I offered a reward to my men if they would bring me one dead or alive, though there was not much likelihood of their doing the latter. They called it a *Jill slange*, or yellow snake. It was about six feet long, and as bright a yellow as gold. The poison fangs are three-quarters of an inch long, and the poison ducts much longer than in the puff-adder. It is considered the most dangerous snake in the desert. I shot one in a tree near the ruins in the Kalahari, the skin of which I gave to my friend Jenner Weir.

Lizards.

Of lizards there are several kinds. One (*Reginia albogularis*) of a yellowish-white colour, mottled with black, is about seven feet six inches long, tail longer than body, tapering to a short point. Feeds on insects. I found the stomach full of a kind of thousand-legged worm, which were six inches long, and half an inch in diameter, and coveredwith hard, horny black shell.

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Among the many small lizards is the *Acantho dactylus*, back light brown, running into orange on its sides, mottled on head and back with darker brown spots; two white stripes run from the eye on either side, the whole length of the body. The toes of the hinder legs are exceedingly long. Feeds on insects.

The *Namaqua eremias* is usually found on the top of the sand-dunes. The colour of its back is a delicate brown (*café-au-lait*), spotted with the same colour but darker, through which run four lines of bright orange; the sides are a creamy yellow. Its great pecularity is in its extraordinary length of tail, which is six inches long, tapering gradually until its tip is quite sharp, while the body is only two inches long.

Another variety is only four and a half inches long: body black, with white spots, and the whole of the tail bright scarlet.

The *Wacht heike*, supposed to be poisonous, is something like a gecko. It comes out from its hole in the sand at night only, making a peculiar sound like putting the tongue against the roof of your mouth and inhaling your breath. It is about six inches long, equally divided between body and tail; colour, light brown with white spots.

There are also some tree-lizards; some a strong bottle-green colour, others a dark blue on the back with light-blue sides, and some nearly black with scarlet cheeks, all averaging about seven inches long. On the rocks at the Hundred Falls were seen dozens of lizards about six inches long with orange-brown backs, scarlet cheeks, white between the eyes, and a shiny green tail.

One small lizard, called by the natives *N'auboo*, is considered very poisonous, but it is highly prized as an antidote to snake-poison. I never saw one alive, but purchased part of one while staying at Mier. The mode of application is described in the body of the book (see pp. 367 and 374). The piece I brought home would have been sufficient to make experiments with, but the ridiculous Anti-Vivisection Act prevents any steps being taken in this country to discover whether the native method of treatment is really an antidote to the *virus* of those snakes whose bite is known to be fatal. It is a monstrous absurdity that, while thousands of lives are lost every year in India alone from snake-bites, the law of England should stand in the way of the simplest experiment being made in order to discover whether a remedy which, so far as my experience goes, is efficacious in the case of South African snakes is equally efficient in the case of the poisonous snakes of other countries.

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Scorpions.

Black and brown scorpions abound all around South Africa, and when bitten by these the natives adopt the same principle of *similia similibus curantur*, by applying the poison of one scorpion to the wound caused by the bite of another. This principle is the same as that adopted by Pasteur in the case of hydrophobia, and I am convinced that there is something to be learned from the practices of these depised Bushmen in the matter of the *virus* of poisonous reptiles. However, in the present state of the laws of England, it is impossible for any practical experiments to be carried out in this country; and, though there is a fair probability of discovering a means of preventing the deaths of the thousands of people who are annually killed by snake-bites, I must send my N'auboo to France and Germany to be tested there!

Tortoises.

The land-tortoise (*Testudo Africa*) feeds entirely on vegetation, sama and grass being its principal food. Hardly a day passes without seeing them, from the size of a penny top to thirty pounds' weight. Their flesh makes a very agreeable addition to the Kalahari *menu* of dried meat.

Chameleons.

I caught several specimens of the *Chameleo vulgaris* fifteen inches long, and kept them in the waggons for weeks, where they climbed about in perfect freedom. When I attempted to catch them they would open their mouths and blow at me, frightening the half-breeds and the guide very much, as they thought they were poisonous. The colour they assumed most frequently was bright green. Their young are produced from white-coloured eggs, nearly spherical, and about the size of a hedge-sparrow's eggs.

THE INSECTS OF THE KALAHARI.

The appendix would be too long to name all the different kinds and describe them. Out of the many specimens I collected and which I presented to Mr. J. Jenner Weir, F.L.S., &c. &c., to add to his very large collection, I will describe some of the most curious and interesting.

The fragile character of most insects and their allies, and the fact that no nets or proper boxes for their reception had been provided,

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rendered it difficult to bring many to England, yet those obtained were not wanting in interest.

Lepidoptera.

Limnas chrysippus; the specimens obtained were of an unusually dark-red colour, and the upper wings more narrow than is generally the case.

Acræa horta, *Belenois mesentina*, and *Herpænia eriphia* were captured, and after a long chase the bright yellow female of *Callidryas florella* was on one occasion obtained; the males, apparently, of this species were more common.

Lycæna trochilus, a tiny butterfly scarcely nine lines in the expanse of its wings, also occurred. It is a remarkable fact that this minute Lepidopteron is found also in the southern parts of Europe; this is also the case with *Limnas chrysippus*.

Rather a scarce *Teracolus*, which is probably *T. Mahopaani*, was once captured.

Three specimens of the widely distributed and very beautiful *Deiopeia pulchella* were taken: this insect has occasionally been captured in England. It is worthy of remark that whilst on the one hand some Lepidoptera have a very limited range, being confined to a single small island, others, as the species in question, are found over a great extent of the earth's surface.

Coleoptera.

Beetles were numerous both in species and specimens; a Longicorn, allied to our musk beetle, was even more strongly scented than that species.

The *Buprestidæ* were very common; some of the species were one inch and three-quarters in length, others barely three-quarters of an inch; some were smooth, and others had their elytra densely clothed with hairs; this peculiarity obtains amongst many of the African Coleoptera; widely different species had a bright red tuft of hair at the outer edge of the elytra near the thorax. What the use of this adornment is it would be difficult to determine.

Species of the families *Carabidæ*, *Cetoniidæ*, *Curculionidæ*, and *Buprestidæ* were obtained, but their names have not yet been determined. The tenacity of life shown by the beetles of the Kalahari, is well illustrated by the fact that a large species of *Brachyceras* survived the journey to England and lived several months afterwards, and even at this date (December, 1885) one beetle is still alive.

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NEUROPTERA.

A very large ant-lion, *Palpares immensus*, was found; this insect, measured upwards of five inches in the expanse of its wings; the European species of *Myrmeleon* is not more than half this size.

The so-called ant-hills, which reach the height of fourteen feet or more, are not formed by ants (Hymenoptera), but by *Termites* (Neuroptera); the structure of these hills resembles a red sandstone, and is nearly as hard; it would seem that the workers secrete some viscid matter, which, with the sand, forms a concrete; the insects brought to England when moistened appeared to give off a small quantity of matter like gum tragacanth.

The contrast between the minute, slender-bodied workers and the large-headed, thick-bodied soldiers of these *Termites* is remarkable; indeed none but a naturalist would recognize them as specifically identical.

ORTHOPTERA.

A nearly apterous Orthopteron, one of the *Acridriidæ* or grasshoppers, was common; this large species, nearly three inches in length and an inch and a half in breadth, closely resembled a toad in appearance, and was of the same brown colour, but the hue varied with that of the ground frequented by the insect, a good instance of response to the environment; it was either a *Batrachotettix* or *Methone anderssonii*.

There was another large species of grasshopper, quite three inches in length, but more slender in shape.

ARACHNIDA.

The most interesting arachnid obtained was one of the *Solpugidea*, probably a species of *Galeodes;* this large spider-like creature was quite two inches in length, its limbs indeed extending from the end of the palpi to the end of the hind-legs, nearly five inches; they presented a remarkable instance of hypertrophy and atrophy; the palpi were two inches nearly in length, and performed the functions of fore-legs, though of course without a claw; the real fore-legs were very slender, barely reaching an inch and a half in length, the second pair of legs were even shorter, and in both pairs the claws were obsolete; the third pair of legs were well developed, and like the hind pair, furnished with large claws; they seemed in conjunction with the palpi to be the most useful to the arachnid in walking; another peculiarity was that both the hind-legs were furnished, towards their base, with what appeared to be pulvilli or sucking disks; these may possibly enable the creature to resist the force

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of the wind, or to steady it on the sides of rocks, so few of the limbs having well-developed claws.

The jaws, half an inch long, working perpendicularly, very strong and hooked at the ends, the two curious eyes planted in the centre of the head vertically, and the other peculiarities mentioned, render this arthropod—it is not strictly an insect—one of the most remarkable creatures obtained by the expedition.

ENTOMOSTRACA.

These Arthropods, which form a sub-class of the *Crustacea*, are well known in England as water-fleas; but such a name would not have been bestowed upon them if the British species had been as large as those from the Kalahari; one belonging to the order *Phylopoda*, either of the genus, or closely allied to, *Apus* reaches nearly the length of one inch and a half; another belonging to the order *Ostracoda*, perhaps of the genus *Cythere*, is about four-tenths of an inch in length; its legs are, unless in use, entirely withdrawn within its shell, which looks like that of a tiny bivalve mollusk. The pools in which the Entomostraca live are often dry for years, but such is their tenacity of life that they survive.

THE BIRDS OF THE KALAHARI.

The many bird skins I collected have not been classified, as I have not had time to send them to the British Museum. The following, however, is a list of the principal birds met with in the Kalahari.

OSTRICH (*Struthio camelus*).

Abounds on the uninhabited parts of the Kalahari. In height it is from seven to eight feet. The males are jet-black with white wing and tail feathers, the long neck and thighs nearly bare. The females are a buff colour. They are gregarious, and found in couples and flocks of a dozen or more. They are very timid and easily take fright, depending upon their legs for safety. They can be run down with a good horse, but the favourite mode is to stalk them. The Bushmen hunt by putting on a skin, and imitate their movements to such perfection that the birds venture close enough to be killed with poisoned arrows. Their flesh is the best found on the Kalahari. Their principal food is grass, but they also eat various berries and seeds of trees and insects.

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VULTURE, or *Aas vogel.*

Colour dark brown; white thick down ring on its neck; quill feathers of wings and tail nearly black. Can see anything from anywhere. When full grown measures ten feet from tip to tip of wings. Its powerful, hooked beak will cut through the thickest hide. It does not wait, as some writers say, for putrefaction to soften the skin and make the flesh palatable. Before the carcase of an antelope had time to cool, let alone become putrid, the bones would be picked clean.

There is another species of Vulture, with a snow-white body, the principal flight feathers being dark brown, and the second flight feathers light brown with dark edges. The head is bald, broad and and flat, and of a yellow colour; beak the same, but with the point black. The upper mandible is slightly hooked. The natives call it a "white crow," and have a superstition that it cannot be killed. It is found usually near the native camps and lives entirely on excrement. It stands twenty inches high, and the wings when outstretched measure forty-five inches from tip to tip.

EAGLE (*Spigatus bellicosus*).

Colour dark brown; quills black; breast and legs lighter in colour. Legs feathered to the toes. Feeds on small antelopes, hares, &c.

NAMAQUA PARTRIDGE, or Sand Grouse (*Pterocles bicinctus*).

Wherever there is water these birds are to be found in thousands in the morning, flying to drink, filling the air with their screeching cry. Plumage dark and light buff marked with purple spots.

PLOVER.

This large red-legged species is the constant companion of the Kalahari traveller, in flocks of from three to ten. It measures twelve inches in height, and sixteen inches in stretch of wings; its legs are seven inches long; the wings are fawn-coloured except the flight quill, the lower half of which is nearly black, and the upper half white; tail white, with a dark brown bar an inch from the end and an inch and a quarter wide; beak red, except the tip which is black; top of head white, with a bar of black over the eyes; neck a light-fawn colour; breast white, with a fawn-coloured spot on the throat; legs red.

PAUW (*Eupodotis*), or Giant Koran.

Colour light brown. When on the ground a full-grown one looks like a half-grown ostrich. Is very shy and difficult of approach. I

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saw some scores, but only managed to get two. About the size of a turkey, and very fine eating. Found on the plains and round the k'gung forests. Feeds on worms, insects, and grass.

KORAN (*Otis tetrax*).

A smaller kind of bustard, about the size of a guinea-fowl, and quite as good eating. Feeds on coleoptera and ants. Colour black and white speckled, the male having two white bars around its neck and on its tail. These birds fly up on the plains every few rods, making a cackling noise until they alight, when they run with such speed that it is impossible to find them unless by accident.

AVOCET (*Recurvirostra avocetta*).

These birds are found wherever there is water, even in pools formed by recent rains that had been dry for a year; their flight is very rapid, and their bright orange-coloured, fat, plump bodies are a great delicacy. The greater part of the plumage is pure white, with jet-black marks on the head, back, neck, wings, and tail. Feet webbed, legs slate-coloured. Its long slender bill turns up at the end like a sewing-awl.

OWL.

Seen frequently in the k'gung-trees; a little brownish-grey thing, about six inches high, with the feathers tipped with white.

NIGHT HAWK, or Night Jar (*Caprimulgus africanus*).

Dark brown, with buff, grey, white, and brown markings. Flies up when disturbed in the daytime, and seems to tumble about as if blind, but in the evening it darts about with the rapidity of the swallow after the flying insects. Seems to be the same as in America, with the exception of the cry, which is a kind of a screaming whistle.

CROW (*Corvus africanus*).

Somewhat larger than the common crow. Has a white ring around his neck. Lives chiefly on insects. Their curiosity to see what is going on, cost several of them their lives during my trip.

GROSBEAK: Sociable Weaver Bird (*Philetierus socius*).

Colour brown, mottled with pale buff. It has a strong short beak, thick at the base. Found all over the Kalahari, wherever there are trees. Its favourite tree to build in is the camel-thorn, an acacia, some of which present an extraordinary appearance; the whole top of a huge tree looks like a giant mushroom, or expanded umbrella

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as much as a couple of tons of grass—still of a bright golden colour—being woven together into a thatch from ten feet deep in the centre to one foot at the edges; the whole of the under surface of the mass is flattened and perforated with little round holes, through which the birds get access to their separate apartments. In one such "common lodging-house" thousands of these little four-inch-long industrious birds rear their young in perfect harmony.

There are other small varieties of weaver bird.

Singing Falcon (*Melierax musicus*).

Two feet long; greyish back and wings, with white belly and legs, barred with brown. Sings in the evening.

Grey Hawk.

About fourteen inches high. Greyish-black wings and tail; bright pink beak, and scarlet legs; red eyes with golden ring around the dark pupil. When flying looks white. Inhabits the camel-trees on Nosob River.

Secretary Bird (*Serpentarius secretarius*).

About three feet high, with long legs; colour leaden grey. The long wing feathers and the feathers on the thigh are black, and so are the crest or mane feathers that stand out from the top of its head and neck. The tail is black all but two feathers, which are grey with a white and black bar at the tip. Lives principally on snakes. Breeds in the k'gung forests, where it makes its nest of dry sticks, a heap a yard thick, and the same in circumference. The young are two callow-looking, naked, yellow-bellied lumps of fat.

Teal.

A very plump little duck, twelve to fourteen inches long, resembling the *Pterocyanea circia*, is frequently found on the pools of Kalahari in the rainy season. Colour chestnut-brown, with light mottlings, something like the colour of what the farmers call a "grey duck." Part of the primaries white, with a bright green bar three inches long.

Diver.

A little diver, about seven inches long, is also found with them; body dark brown, with ash-coloured breast; black sharp bill.

Hammerkop.

A wader; its big head, long neck, and short tail give it a most grotesque appearance. Its black beak, three inches long, is narrow,

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with sharp ridge on the top and a pointed hook at the end. Colour, a beautiful bronze velvety brown; the primaries are somewhat darker than the rest of the feathers. It feeds on frogs and crustacea, fish, &c.

Mahou.

A bird known to the natives by this name inhabits the k'gung forest. It is ten inches long. With its crested head and long, slightly curved beak, it looks like the hoopoe. The neck, breast, and abdomen are a bright reddish-brown; the crest feathers, about an inch and a half long, are tipped with black; a black bar divides the neck feathers from the back and shoulders, and below it, for an inch, there are narrow curved bars, light brown tinged with orange, divided by black ones. Next to the tail is a white bar, extending to the tail feathers, which are a shiny bottle-green. The wings are the same colour except the inner quills, which are barred with white and black tinged with light brown.

Quail.

The Kalahari quail is about half the size of the Virginian quail, measuring only four inches in length; when sitting down it does not look much larger than a sparrow. Wing feathers darkish brown, barred with light-brown spots. From the top of the head to tail the dark-brown barred feathers have a creamy-white centre, which looks like a separate pointed feather. Throat yellowish-brown, short black beak, and reddish legs.

Camel Bird.

A kind of hornbill; eighteen inches long; tail eight inches; its upper beak a dirty yellow with black shades, about two and a half inches long, forming a gradual curve from the top of the head, above the eye, to the end, which is sharp. The base of the beak, which is an inch wide at the lower part, gradually recedes to a sharp ridge, and extends one inch behind the eye. Fine, hair-like feathers, black and white, compose the short topknot, growing close down to and forward of the eye-covers, the chin being bare; neck white, with white line running down the back and meeting a row of jet-black feathers adjoining the wings, which are also white and black, with brown edges. The long wing feathers are all black, excepting four next to the outermost ones, which have a black spot on them two inches from the end. There are ten tail feathers, the middle four a jet-black, the three on either side with bars of white, and tipped with white. The breast and under feathers are covered with a kind of

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down of a mixed white and black colour, as also are the legs. The feet have four toes and jet-black nails. I give this minute description because I think the bird a new species.

THE MAMMALIA OF THE KALAHARI.

Leopard (*Felis leopardus*).

Called by all the native hunters "tiger." There are two varieties, the large and the small. The former is the most dreaded of the African felines, as he will never move aside if he is met, and usually makes the attack. It causes great havoc among the flocks of sheep on the Orange River border. In the k'gung forest it is but seldom found. Its strength is marvellous when compared with its size. Colour bright yellow ground thickly covered with very dark round spots.

Caracal (*Caraçal*).

Very much resembles a lynx, its short tail and ears giving it a decided lynx-like appearance. Colour pale brown with a tinge of red, and here and there dark reddish spots. Like the jackal it is not too proud to partake of a supper provided by the lion.

Lynx (*Felis caligatus*).

Colour reddish-tawny, with long black hairs protruding from the face, and some dark stripes on its legs and sides of the face. It is smaller than the caracal and possesses a long tail with a black tip, being about two feet in length, not including its tail, which is about one foot long.

Chetah (*Cyœlurus jubatas*).

Called by the natives the "hunting tiger," though not of a ferocious nature. Resembles a leopard, but has much longer legs, and smaller head. It has greater speed, but much less strength, than the leopard. In its general appearance it looks as much canine as feline.

Lion (*Felis leo*).

The largest of the cat tribe; is found all over the Kalahari, especially where the antelopes are plentiful—excepting where man has taken up his abode. The habits of the pastoral settler and Leo are so opposite, that they could not agree to live together. The colour is a tawny yellow, lighter on the under parts; the edge of the ear blackish; the tip of the tail covered with a tuft of longish black hairs; the neck and shoulders of the male carry a mantle of black

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shaggy hair, covering the throat and chin. The lioness has no mane. A full-grown male will measure four feet at the shoulder, but the usual height is about three feet six inches, and about eleven feet in total length. It sleeps in the daytime, and hunts at night for its food, taking up a track and following it like a sleuth-hound, stealing up to its prey until it is close enough to make one bound upon it, which it does with a roar. The lion is not averse to procure a supper, if possible, without so much trouble, and in fact would not refuse the remnants of any putrid carcase. It rarely ever attacks man, and only in extreme cases of hunger will it attack a camp. Then the horses are the object of its visit, as it has a great partiality for horse-flesh. Many hunters spend months, seeing the spoor daily and hearing their roar almost nightly, without ever catching sight of one, while others have been attacked in their camps, and lost either horses or oxen. The hunters say when the lion roars there is no danger, as he has had his supper. Lions usually hunt in company, and when they succeed in pulling a giraffe down, their first hunger is satisfied with the entrails. No doubt the blood and entrails of the animals slake their thirst, although the natives say they eat the sama (water-melon), which I doubt.

HARE (*Lepus africanus*).

Found all over the Kalahari; resembles the English hare in colour and habits, but is considerably larger.

GIRAFFE (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)

The tallest of all the animals, sometimes reaching twenty-three feet in height. There are two varieties; one with dark spots, and the other with spots nearly white; the latter being the taller, while the former is the heavier. Feeds principally on the leaves and seed-pods of the k'gung-trees, which forests they inhabit. Being very shy, they shrink from observation. They are found in herds, or rather families, of from six to ten; sometimes a male wanders about by himself, and is easily ridden down, if he can be suddenly surprised, but requires a good horse to come up with him if he discovers the hunter first. The flesh is much esteemed for jerked meat (biltong). The hide of the neck, one inch thick, is used to make whip-stalks and lashes all in one, and the rest of the skin is used for shoe-soles, shields, &c. The white spotted ones have never been brought to Europe.

BABOON, or Chacma (*Cynocephalus porcarius*).

Called by the Boers Bovians. Found in great numbers on the

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rocky mountains bordering the Orange River, and a few are found on the cliffs of the dry bed of the Nosob. Several times they were seen on the desert far away from water, which they are supposed to have the power of finding. They move about in large bands of hundreds of all sizes and ages, living on scorpions, insects, and roots, the favourite food being the kiki, the bulb of which they readily find when the stem has disappeared. They are very cunning, and are rarely seen except on the cliffs, where they make their homes in the caves. To hunt them single-handed is very dangerous, as the full-grown ones attain the size of a mastiff, and they are armed with two canine teeth two inches long. Colour a dark greyish-brown, with black face and muzzle.

HIPPOPOTAMUS (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), or River Horse.

A native of most African rivers, and still to be found in the Lower Orange River. The average height is about five feet, with very short legs, and very bulky, unwieldy bodies. Colour dark brown. The skin, which looks as if oil was oozing from it, is covered with black spots. Amphibious; but lives mostly in the water; feeds on roots, grass, and bushes.

AARD VAARK (*Orycteropus capensis*).

An ant-eater; armed with powerful claws that will dig through the hardest dwellings of the ants, on which it feeds, or the hardest ground to dig its hole, which is large enough for a man to crawl into. It is said to dig faster with its hoof-like claws than a man will with a spade. Length about five feet: the strong thick tail, about twenty inches, is thinly covered with dark-brown coarse bristly hair. Is very good eating. Is never seen in the daytime.

AARD WOLF (*Proteles cristatus*).

Belongs to the civet family, although both in colour, size, and shape it looks like a hyena, for which it is taken, and is so called by most of the hunters. Length three feet six inches; tail twelve inches.

MEERKAT (*Cynictis penicillata*).

Burrows a hole in the ground large enough for an animal twice its size, in which it lives in families of twenty or thirty. Looks very much like a grey squirrel when it sits up and watches any one passing by its settlement. A very pretty animal, with a bushy tail. Tawny brown and grey; makes a very nice pet, being easily tamed.

RHINOCEROS (*Rhinoceros bicornis*).

A clumsy, fierce, and dangerous animal, and when wounded is

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truly a fearful opponent. Has been frequently known to attack a hunter immediately he saw him. Its black thick hide will resist a bullet unless at close quarters. Its food consists of roots, grass, and bushes. The natives make sjamboks (whips) out of the skin, cutting it into strips, drying it, and then paring it down to the shape with a knife. Such a whip will last for years.

DOSSI, or KLIP HAAS (*Hyrax capensis*).

About as large as a rabbit; covered with soft dark-brown fur. Inhabits all the rocky portions of the Kalahari, taking its abode among the crevices and fissures of the rocks. It has little hoofs like a pig. Is very good eating—when you can get one, which is difficult, as it is very shy. If you are discovered by the sentinel on guard, he warns his comrades that there is danger in the air, and you may hunt another hour without seeing one stick his nose out. The most extraordinary thing about this innocent thing is that naturalists have classed it as one of the pachydermata.

BIG-EARED DOG (*Otocyon megalotis*).

About the size of a small fox; a beautiful light-grey colour, interspersed with big black hairs; the ears are longer than its head; legs darker than the body.

QUAGGA (*Asinus quagga*).

Resembles a wild ass and zebra mixed, only the stripes are not nearly as thick, nor do they reach the feet; the rest of the body is brown. Roams the Kalahari in herds, and its flesh and skin are much sought after by the natives.

ZEBRA (*Asinus zebra*).

The most beautiful of the family of asses. Colour creamy-white, marked regularly with black stripes covering the greater part of the body down to the hoofs, the markings strongly resembling those of the Bengal tiger. The body stripes are vertical, those of the legs horizontal. End of tail black, abdomen and between legs creamy-white. Found in herds near mountainous country and sometimes on the plains. The zebra obtained was the true zebra, not Burchell's zebra.

ELEPHANT (*Lozodonta africana*).

This huge pachyderm is being rapidly driven out of South Africa, although the Government have reserved parks for its preservation in their wild state; but the yearly permission given to kill one is often extended to several. The depredations which it commits in the

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surrounding districts are another cause of its gradual decrease. In a few years, save in Zululand, it will be extinct south of the Orange and Crocodile Rivers.

Hartebeeste (*Alcephalus caama*).

A large antelope, five feet five inches at shoulders, and seven feet long. Its peculiar horns tell the hunter at once what it is: they are thick and heavily knotted at the base for about six inches, and then fall back suddenly at right angles. Colour greyish-brown, a black stripe running from the end of the nose to the tail and one down each leg. It generally keeps in little families of fifteen or twenty.

Koodoo (*Strepsiceros kudu*).

The handsomest of all the antelope family. This splendid animal is about four feet at the shoulders, and heavily made all over. Its spiral twisted corrugated horns are from three feet to three feet six inches long. When fat, a good horse will run it down in two hours.

Eland (*Oreas canna*).

The largest of the whole of the antelopes, weighing as much as an ox. A full-grown bull will measure over six feet at the shoulders. It is squarely built, and often puts on so much fat that it can be ridden down more easily than any other antelope on the Kalahari. Its flesh is most juicy. The colour is a pale greyish-brown. There are two species, varying only in colour—the one being striped.

All of these antelopes live without water, the succulent leaves and grass furnishing sufficient moisture for their wants. I noticed, on some of them we shot, a fleshy protuberance on the nose, which the natives said was a bruise, but which showed no signs of having been injured, and which presented, when cut open, quite a normal state, without any inflammation.

Buffalo (*Bubalus Kaffir*).

One of the fiercest of South African game, and sure to attack you, especially if wounded. Its blue-black skin is hard to penetrate with an ordinary bullet. The bases of its wide horns completely cover the top of its head, forming an impregnable armour to the attack of other animals. Is gregarious in its habits, feeding principally at night, and is fond of a shady repose in the daytime.

Spring-bok (*Amidorcas euchori*).

A most appropriate name, and one which it deserves, from the extraordinary leaps which it is in the habit of making when alarmed,

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jumping straight into the air from ten to thirteen feet, and frequently leaping in the same way for its own amusement. It is a very graceful and timid animal, roaming about in vast herds of from 10 to 50,000, following up the rainfall, to get fresh pasture. When they "trek," every one turns out to get a supply of skins, &c., and of the best venison ever eaten.

STEIN-BOK, or Ourchi (*Scopophorus ourchi*).

A pretty little bok found all over the sandy plains; colour pale tawny, white underneath. The male is armed with little sharp black spikes for horns. When startled from their lair, they jump high over the grass, dodging first to one side, then to the other, like a snipe flying, and then suddenly disappear by dropping down.

KLIPSPRINGER (*Oreotragus saltatrix*).

Usually found (like the stein-bok sometimes are) on stony hills, and as agile as a chamois, jumping up the perpendicular sides of one rock to another. It is a very little creature, not more than twenty inches high when full grown. Colour, a grizzly brown.

DUYKER-BOK (*Cephalophus mergens*).

Found all over Kalahari, but very solitary, more than one rarely ever being seen at once. It inhabits long grass and stunted bushes. Colour brownish-yellow, with black legs, tail, and nose.

GEMS-BOK (*Oryx leucoryx*).

The handsomest and most plentiful of the Kalahari antelopes. Stands nearly four feet high, and while feeding looks as large as an ox. Its general grey colour is peculiarly marked with streaks of black along the back and flanks, while a similar streak, with a snow-white border, passes across the face and runs under the chin. It has a long black tail and short mane. Its horns are sometimes four feet long, and as sharp as needles, and nearly straight from base to tip.

WILDEBEESTE, or Gnu (*Connochætes gorgon*).

The tamest and easiest to kill of all the antelopes. Its curiosity to see any strange object makes it an easy prey to the hunter, and, I should think, to its carnivorous enemies. It looks more like a horse with horns than an antelope, save for its colour, which is bluish-grey. Its height is about three feet six inches, and its length about six feet.

JACKAL (*Canis mesomelas*).

Its size exceeds that of a large fox. Colour a reddish-tawny, with

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a black stripe the whole length of its back. Instead of being the "lion's provider," it howls about and waits for the crumbs from Leo's table, and the traveller can hardly get beyond the sound of his nightly serenades.

WILDE HUNDE (*Lycaon venaticus*).

Also called "wolf" by the natives, and "wild dog" by the Boers. Its head is not unlike that of the hyena, but it lacks its sloping hind-quarters.

HYENA (*Hyena crocuta*).

Height two feet six inches at the shoulder, growing less towards the rump. Head short, neck very thick. General colour brown, nose and feet black. Body covered with circular spots. The hair on back and withers about eight inches long. Is a general scavenger, and will eat almost anything. Its powerful jaw will crush the thickest bones.

AH (*Vulpes ah*).

A species of fox, whose fur is more highly esteemed by the Bechuanas than even that of the large black-striped jackal. It is a great enemy to the ostrich, whose nests it robs.

PORCUPINE, or Eister Vark (*Hystrix cristata*).

Habits nocturnal. When surprised it will roll itself into a ball and raise its quills, which will pierce anything that attacks it, making a noise the while with the hollow short quills attached to its tail, not unlike the rattle of the rattlesnake. The flesh is good eating, tasting something like sucking-pig.

SPRING HAAS, or Cape Jerboa (*Helamis capensis*).

Found all over the Kalahari. Shaped something like a kangaroo. Habits nocturnal, burrowing holes in the sand, where it sleeps until sundown. Lives wholly on vegetables, and is a pest in the South-African gardens. When chased will leap from twenty to thirty feet at a bound. Colour dark fawn, fading to greyish-white beneath. Tail as long as the body, covered with stiff hairs.

THE GEOLOGY OF THE KALAHARI.

The geological specimens which I brought home from the Kalahari include diamonds, copper, crocodilite, asbestos, agates, soap-stone,

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slate, coal, iron, and a kind of soft black stone that the natives grind to a fine powder and mix with grease to blacken their faces with.

TABLE OF DISTANCES.

From Upington to Mier:

Three and a half to 4 days on horseback, and 6 or 7 days with ox-waggon. Distance is always reckoned by the hour—each hour, on horseback, being equivalent to about six miles. In the following table the times are given "on horseback:"—

From Upington to Zwart Modder, direct, 10 hours.		
„	Upington to Arikaap, 2½ hours .	Rain pan.
„	Arikaap to Rooi pits, 1½ hours .	Brack pits.
„	Rooi pits to Blau Bosch, 2 hours .	Rain pan.
„	Blau Bosch to Grundnuse, 2½ hours .	Rain pan.
„	Grundnuse to Kukup, 2 hours. .	Rain pan.
„	Kukup to Zwart Modder, 2½ hours .	Fresh water pit.
„	Zwart Modder to Zout Pits, ½ hour .	Brack pit.
„	Zout Pits to Blomfontein, ½ hour .	Fresh water.
„	Blomfontein to K'Abeam, 1 hour .	Large pool.
„	K'Abeam to Spring-bok Vley, 1 hour	Vley.
„	Spring-bok Vley to K'hamkigora, 2 hours	Vley and pit.
„	K'hamkigora to Anerougas, 2½ hours	Dam.
„	Anerougas to Schoon Veldt, 1½ hours	Large dam.
„	Schoon Veldt to Rautenbachs, 3 hours	Brack pit and rain lake.
„	Rautenbachs to Mier, 2 hours . .	Fresh and brack pits.

From Zwart Modder, down the Hyob, to the Hundred Falls:

1½ to 2 days horseback, 3½ to 4 days ox-waggon.

From Zwart Modder to N'Gous, 1½ hours .		Fresh pit.
„	N'Gous to Smallfish, 1 hour . .	Fresh pit.
„	Smallfish to N'eintas 1½ hours .	Fresh pit.
„	N'eintas to Harper's Gorge, 2 hours .	Fresh pit.
„	Harper's Gorge to Orange Berg Werf, 2½ hours	Orange River.

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From Orange Berg Werf to the Hundred Falls, 1½ hours . . . . Orange River.

From the Hundred Falls to Upington:

1½ days on horseback, 3 days ox-waggon. One road follows the river; the other saves the bends by going across country. I give the latter:—

From the Hundred Falls to Orange Berg Werf, 1½ hours	River water.
„ Orange Berg Werf to Lilagh Hoghta, 1½ hours	No water.
„ Lilagh Hoghta to Nuit Gedaght, 3 hours	Orange River.
„ Nuit Gedaght to Upington, 4 hours .	Orange River.

Traders' route from Upington to Damaraland.

The distances vary considerably between these places, some of the "hours" being nearer ten miles than six, others less. Water is also to be had between these places. The average distance from water to water is about 2 hours, and the greatest distance is 8:—

From Upington to Zwart Modder, 10 hours	Fresh water.
„ Zwart Modder to Hodap, 14 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Hodap to Scrap Klep, 1½ hours .	Fresh water.
„ Scrap Klep to Ungas, 2½ hours .	Fresh water.
„ Ungas to Kheis, 2½ hours . .	Fresh water.
„ Kheis to Leo River, 7 hours . .	Fresh water.
„ Leo River to Warm Bakies, 3 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Warm Bakies to Zwart Modder, 3½ hours	Fresh water.
„ Zwart Modder to Blau, 3 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Blau to Daboras, 8 hours . .	Fresh water.
„ Daboras to Amadap, 6 hours . .	Fresh water.
„ Amadap to N'arougas, or Oup, 5 hours	Fresh water.
„ N'arougas to Zett Fontein, 12 hours	Fresh water.
„ Zett Fontein to Zwart Modder, 1¼ hours	Fresh water.
„ Zwart Modder to Quakengas,[1] 2 hours	Fresh water.

[1] The headquarters of Manassa, the chief of the Red Nation.

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From Quakengas to Bitter Pits, 1½ hours .	Fresh water.
„ Bitter Pits to Lecker Water,[2] 7 hours	Fresh water.
„ Lecker Water to Kankuis, 4 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Kankuis (Abbas Mountains) to Windhock,[3] 7 hours	Fresh water.
„ Windhock to Barmeu, 10 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Barmeu to Klim Barmeu,[4] 2 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Klim Barmeu to Kiver Pit,[4] 4 hours.	Fresh water.
„ Kiver Pit to Ouit Drei,[4] 2 hours .	Fresh water.
„ Ouit Drei to Ojimbengue, 2 hours .	Fresh water.

[2] Four sand-dunes, not very heavy.

[3] 1000 springs come out of the white limestone mountains, forming a stream that remains warm for miles.

[4] On the Swachob River.

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INDEX.

Abram's Dam, 85.
Africander, Jan, 279.
Agriculture among the Bakalahari, 211.
Ah, The, 288.
Anerougas, 274.
—— Dam, 378.
Anna Falls, the, 409.
—— Trees, 257.
Antelopes, 57, 67, 81, 160, 181, 238, 317, 354, 465.
Ants, Edible, 107.
——, White, 108, 455.
Archæological discovery, A, 268, 357.
Avocets, 128, 130, 458.

Baboon, Eating a, 421.
Baden-Powell, Mr., 445.
Bakalahari, The, 210.
Bakaris, 146.
Balalas, The, 199.
Bangweketsi, The, 187.
Bartlett, Mr., The Missionary, 58.
Bastard Encampment, A, 47, 99, 115, 377.
—— families, 116, 276.
Bastards, Customs of, 84, 281, 284, 295.
——, History of the, 279.
Bats, 301.
Beer, A curious, 433.
Bees, Wild, 107, 341.
——, Hunting, 341.
Beetles, 251, 359, 456.
Berry, A peculiar, 217.
——, An edible, 290.
Biltong, Making, 315, 355.
Bird's nest, A large, 197, 360.
Birds of the Kalahari, 48, 53, 65, 86, 128, 130, 196, 231, 288, 298, 304, 402, 456.
Blasting the Blue ground, 30, 42.
Blue ground, The, 20, 26, 30.
"Boer," Meaning of the word, 4.
——, The "honest," 10, 443.
—— salutation, A, 47, 49, 105.
—— residence, A, 9, 69.
—— family, A, 4, 38.
——, Character of, 49, 82, 438, 443, 444, 445.
Book rocks, 397.
"Boy," Origin of the term, 279.
Brak river, 443.
Buffalo hunt, A, 265.
Bulbs (*see* "roots" and "plants.")
Bug, A scented, 251.
Bushman, Killing a, by mistake, 346.
Bushman's potato, 106.
—— rice, 107.
Bushmen, the, 98, 442.
——, their food, 105, 152, 438.
—— medicines, 202.
——, Hill, 123, 438.
——, Sculptures by, 124.
——, Gluttony of, 125, 254.
Butterflies, 333, 454.

Cactus, poisonous, 103.
Camel-bird, The (*see* Giraffe-bird).
Campbell, 57.
Carboom, 440.
Caun, the trader, 147, 363.
Carrion plant, A, 436, 449.
Cattle, Price of, 63.

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Cattle ranche, A, in S. Africa, 236.
—— diseases, 11, 64.
——, Damara, 149, 272, 364.
Chameleon, A, 334, 453.
Christie, Mr., 71.
Chrysalis, Eating, 176.
Church, Going to, with the Bastards, 282.
Colesburg Koppje, 19.
Conjuring in the Desert, 191.
Cope's Farm, 83.
Cows, Value of, 184.
Cranes, 129.
Cricket, Giant, 288.
Cruelties to the Natives, 369, 443.

Damaras, The, 150, 271.
——, King of the, 272.
Dams, Value of, 10, 14, 85 (*see also* "Irrigation").
Davis, Mr., 96.
De Aar junction, 6.
Detective department, The, 26.
Dews, Heavy, 362.
Diamond brokers, 21.
—— companies, 18, 24, 37.
—— mines, The, 18.
——, A big, 110.
—— stealers, 31, 36.
——, The first, 18.
—— sorting, 35.
—— washing, 32.
—— Falls, 413.
Diamonds, Swallowed, 31.
——, Value of, 35, 37.
——, Hunting for, 111.
Dirk, 150.
Diseases of cattle, &c., 11, 64.
Distances, Table of, 468.
Docha, or wild hemp, 125, 212.
Drought, A great, 3, 5, 76.
Ducks, 129, 231.
Dwarf, A, visits us, 168.
Dwarf, The, of Lake N'gami, 178, 252.

Eau-de-Cologne as a beverage, 212, 321.
Eland, 238.
Elephant hunt, A, 257.
Elevation, Gradual, of the Continent, 271.
Euphorbia candelabra, 385.

Falls of the Orange River, 382, 389.
——, compared with Niagara, 417.
Farini Towers, 404.
Fartein, Michael, 74.
Flamingoes, 129.
Flora of the Kalahari, 103, 126, 131, 180, 212, 290, 379, 385, 436, 447.
Forest, A, 195, 236.
Fritz (*see* "I'll-vatch-it").
Fryer, Mr., 430.
Funeral customs, Curious, 272.

Game, Abundance of, 71, 285, 317.
Gamka River, 4.
Garden, King Mapaar's, 211.
——, A beautiful, 435.
Geese, 129 (*see also* "Waterfowl.")
Gems-bok, 160, 317.
——, Hunting the, 354.
Geology of the Kalahari, 417, 467.
Ghanze, 245, 251.
Giraffe hunt, A, 291, 318.
——, white spotted, 295, 462.
—— bird, The, 304, 460.
——, Catching a young, 322.
——, Skinning a, 324.
Gnu, or wildebeest, 130.
Gordon, General, Death of, 121.
Gorilla rock, 398.
Grapes, 431.
Grass in the Desert, 127, 131, 158, 184.
Griqua chieftainess, A, 60.
Griqua Town, 68.
—— founded, 74.
Griqua land sold to the English, 72.
——, King of, 72.
Grosbeak nest, A large, 196, 360.
Groot Drink, 439.
Guinea-fowl, 402.

Habits and Customs of Natives, 98, 123, 215, 226, 255, 272.
Halliburton, Secretary to Dirk Verlander, 284, 371.
Harris, Mr., Murder of, 169.
Helm, the Missionary, 75.
Herraras, The, 72.
Hercules Falls, The, 398, 414, 426.
Hexe Mountains and River, 2.
Hippopotamus, 429.

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Honey-beer and its effects, 343.
Hope Town, 7, 444.
Horse diseases, 64,
——, My, is drowned, 118.
——, Buying a, 80.
Horses, "Houses for," 154.
Hottentot medicines, 433.
Hottentots, The, 150, 384.
Hundred Falls, The, 418 (*see also* "Falls of Orange River").
Hunting among the Bakalahari, 214, 218.
Hyena, The, 302, 467.
——, Eating a, 127.

Illicit diamond buying, 22, 25.
"I'll-watch-it," Rescue of, 179.
Insects, 107, 108, 246, 288, 341, 453.
——, Scented, 251.
Irrigation dams, 10, 14, 85.
—— works at Upington, 435.

Jackal, The, 288, 301, 467.
——, Eating a, 289.
Jan, the driver, 44.
—— is lost, 88, 101.
Janssen, the Missionary, 74.
Judging distances, 66.

K'Abiam Pool, 381.
Kaffirs and civilization, 27.
Kalahari, The, Birds of, 48, 53, 65, 86, 128, 130, 196, 231, 288, 298, 304, 402, 456.
——, Flora of, 103, 126, 131, 180, 212, 290, 379, 385, 436, 447.
——, Geology of, 417, 467.
——, Insects of, 107, 108, 246, 288, 341, 453.
——, Game in, 71, 285, 317.
——, Mammalia of, 461.
——, Grass in the, 127, 131, 158, 184.
Kamahamahero, King, 272.
Kameroo, The, 374, 376.
Karroo, The Great, 2, 3.
Katteah, The, 177.
Kattea tribe, 348.
Kerses, 274.
Kert, our guide, 97.
—— adventures of, in England, 154.
K'gung-trees, The, 195, 236.
Kheis, 94.
Ki Ki mountain, The, 288, 356.
Kimberley, 14, 38.
Klas, 150.
Kok, Cornelius, Widow of, 59, 60.
Koodoo hide, 203.
Koran, The, 65, 86.
Koranna, The, 114, 432.
——, War with, 369.
Korap, Little, the dwarf, 171.
Kuis, 147.

"Lady Anna" bought, 80.
—— killed, 366.
Libuschani vley 128, 130.
Lihutitung, 203.
Lion impaled on gems-bok's horns, 165.
——, Bitten by a, 199.
——, Habits of, 305.
——, Photographing a, 307.
——, Long leap by a, 306, 311.
Lions, 153, 160, 238, 273, 461.
——, Hunting, 162, 239, 307.
Livingstone, Dr., 58.
Lizards, 451.
Lost in the Desert, 135, 173.
Lulu Falls, 396.
Lung-sickness, 64.

Makgoe, the chief, 147.
Mammalia of the Kalahari, 461.
Manners and customs of the Natives, 98, 123, 215, 226, 255, 272.
Mapaar, the chief, 204, 207.
——, his garden, 211.
Marriage made easy, 209.
Marurututlu, 237.
Melon, cultivated, 211.
——, wild (*see* Sama).
Meteor, A, 437.
Mier, 275, 368.
Mining pioneers, 40.
Milk, Making thick, 216, 274.
—— bush, The, 394.
Milking the cows, 242.
Missionaries, 75.
M'Kabba tribe, The, 175, 252.
Modder River, 13.
Moffat, Dr., 75.
Monkeys, 102, 421.
Morality, Loose ideas of, 210.
Mules *v.* cattle, 46.
——, Losing the, 86.

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Namaqualand, No rain in, 5, 72.
N'auboo, The, 374, 376, 452.
Nest, A huge, 196, 360.
—— of spider, 213.
Newman, Mr., 65.
Nicht Gédaght, 430.
Night in a tree, A, 297.
—— in the desert, A, 314.
Noi bush, The, 155.
Nosob River, 287.

Orange River, The, 383.
——, Crossing, 8.
——, Falls of, 382, 389.
——, Terminus, 7.
Ostrich farm, An, 6, 50, 445.
—— hunting, 133, 325, 330.
—— eating, 134, 328.
—— feathers, Value of, 327.
——, roaring, A, 329.
Ostriches, 126, 456.
Oxen *v.* Mules, 94, 109, 120, 365.
Ox-riding, 122.
Ox-yokes, 94.

Partridges, Namaqua, 48, 53, 85.
Pheasants, 402.
Photographing an explosion, 42.
—— a lion, 307.
—— the Falls, 399, 405, 426.
—— Kimberley, 18.
—— the Natives, 215, 223.
Pillyass, 187, 230.
Poisoned arrows, 254, 330.
——, How to make, 335.
Poisonous roots, Eating, 138.
Porcupine, A, 126.
Pont, A, 51, 115.
Potato, Bushmen's, 106.
Precipice, Leap over a, 428.
Prieska, 442.
Prices of provisions at Kimberley, 38.

Queen, The, and the Boers, 441.
Quagga, 268.

Railway, The, 6.
Rautenbach's Pan, 281, 287, 376.
Rain, Foretelling the, 229.
Rain, Scarcity of, 5, 72, 76.
—— fall, Heavy, 55, 233, 241.
Raisin bushes, 290.
Reef, Fall of, at the diamond mines, 19.
Reptiles of the Kalahari, 356, 367, 374, 450.
Rescue of a sick traveller, 179.
Rhinoceros, Hunting the, 247.
River-beds, Dry, 4, 287.
Rivers, Rapid rise and fall of, 13, 51, 401, 405, 414.
Roads in South Africa, 88.
Roots, Edible, 106, 126, 176, 271.
——, Poisonous, 106, 181, 379.
Ruins on the Kalahari, 268, 357.

Salt Pans, 377.
Sama, The (*see also* Water Melon), 131, 147, 179, 267, 324, 366, 381.
——, How to cook, 150.
——, Bitter, 151.
—— water, Washing in, 205.
Sand-dunes, Crossing the, 108, 119, 287.
Sandfontein, 273.
Scorpion, Catching a, 246.
—— sting, 246.
Schoon Veldt Dam, 377.
Scott, Mr. J., 434.
—— Falls, 413.
Sculptured dwellings of Hill-Bushmen, 124.
Seeds, Collecting, 131.
Skins, How to tan, 202.
Smidt's Pont, 51.
Smith, Coe 427.
Snake, Bitten by a, 356, 367.
—— robbing a bird's nest, 360.
—— bite, Cure for, 367, 374, 452.
Snakes, 61, 450.
Snipe, 129.
Soenya, A, 187.
Sorting diamonds, 34.
Spirits, intoxicating, Taste for, 212.
Spider, A large, 212, 455.
Spring-bok, 67.
——, Poisoned, 181.
—— venison, 12.
Stampede of oxen, 244, 385.
Stein-bok, 81.
Stiff-sickness, 64.
Stink-wood, 52.

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Stink plant, A, 436.
Stones, Curious, 268.

Tanning Skins, 202.
Teal, 232.
Temperature, The, 55, 362.
Thirst, Death from, 135.
Thunderstorm, A, 55.
Timber cutting, 50, 53.
Tin houses, 14.
Tobacco, 211, 371, 431.
——. Native substitute for, 125, 212.
Tortoises, 453.
Tree, A night in a, 296.
Trial, I am put on my, 225.
Truffles, 254.
Turtle-dove, The, 57.

Upington, 434.

Vaalpens, The, 237, 348, 349.
Vaal River, The, 51.
Verlander, Dirk, 275, 368.
Virtue's Farm, 62.
Vultures, 288, 298, 457.
——, Range of vision of, 300.

Waggon, Packing our, 44, 182.
War between Damaras and Namaquas, 149.
Washing diamonds, 33.
Watering the cattle, 244.
Waterboer, Orontes, 72, 76.
Water-melon, The, 106, 211, 251 (*see also* Sama).
Water, Subterranean, 126, 132, 198.
——, Scarcity of, 131, 245, 353.
—— fowl, 128, 230, 380.
——, Muddy, to drink, 145.
——, Collecting, in egg-shells, 353.
—— insects, 359, 456.
Wells, 85, 147.
Wheat, 211, 372.
Wildebeeste, 130.
Wilkerhout's Drift, 110, 438.
Wire fencing, 14.
Witch-doctor, A, 187.
——, I become a, 230.
Wittewater, 80.
Women, Scarcity of, at Kimberley, 23.

Zebras, 268.
Zechobaar, 86.
Zwart Modder, 383.

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